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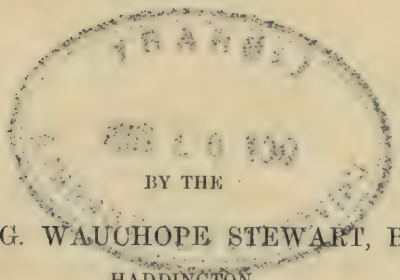

BY THE

Rev. G. WAUCHOPE STEWART, B.D.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

It is hoped that this contribution to the *Guild Library*, from the pen of one who combines a special knowledge of the subject with other qualifications of a general nature, will not only have an educative value for the Guilds, but will also be found useful by the members and masters of church choirs, and by many of the general public who are interested in the history and development of Church music.

J. A. M'C.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS volume seeks to give a brief account of the service rendered by music as an auxiliary to Church worship. A considerable portion of the book is historical, but no attempt has been made to give anything approaching an exhaustive treatment of the history of the subject. The method pursued has been to select certain periods in the history of the Church which are of special interest because of the musical forms evolved in them, and to concentrate attention upon these. The last three chapters contain a short discussion of some of the practical questions that arise in connexion with the employment of music in worship under present conditions. While it is believed that much that is there said may be applicable to other Churches, the form of worship which has supplied the point of view for the suggestions offered is that of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland.

The book is designed for general readers who can lay no claim to practical knowledge of music. So far as possible, technicalities have been avoided, and where it has been found necessary to introduce any technical expressions, sufficient explanation has been given to make them intelligible to the ordinary reader.

The author has pleasure in expressing his gratitude

to the Rev. H. W. Wright, D.D., Aberdeen; the Rev. George Bell, Mus.D., Govan; J. A. Hope, Esq., LL.B., W.S., Edinburgh; and A. C. M. Bell, Esq., W.S., Edinburgh, who have been kind enough to read the proof-sheets, and to whom he is indebted for many valuable and helpful suggestions. He would likewise express his indebtedness, in the last section of the book, to the admirable paper by the Rev. H. Wotherspoon, M.A., on "The Present State of Church Music in Scotland," in *Transactions of the Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society*, 1891. He desires also to thank the Editor, Dr. M'Clymont, for his kind encouragement and advice.

G. WAUCHOPE STEWART.

The Manse, Haddington,
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE subject of our study is Music in the Church, *i.e.* music subject to the influence and employed in the service of religion. Like all the other arts, music has been brought into close association with religion, and has not only been able to render valuable aid to the Church in her worship, but has itself been enormously benefited and enriched by the new spirit breathed into it by that association. It was indeed the demands made by the Church upon the art that awakened it from the lethargy in which it lay, and urged it forward to develop its resources. The early history of music, once it attained the dignity of an art worthy to have its history recorded, is almost entirely a history of sacred music.

But the association of music with religion is not merely a matter of past history. To the present day that association continues with most beneficial results both to the Church and to the art of music. True, with the advance of the art it was able to strike out new forms and to develop along other lines. Sacred music, instead of being the whole of the art, is now only one branch of it. But it is a branch of the utmost importance. The art would be incalculably the poorer were the musical wealth which it has poured into the treasury of the Church not credited to it. And on the other hand,

religion is deeply indebted to music for the service it renders in the public worship of the sanctuary. No art is so admirably fitted to express the deepest feelings of the heart, those feelings which find satisfaction in divine worship. We have only to think what our church worship would be without the aid of music to realise what a valuable ally it has been to the cause of religion, and what a grievous loss the Church would suffer were she to be deprived of the service of the art.

How is it that the connexion between religion and music has been so close? Why has this one art been singled out above all the others to play such an important part in the worship of the Church? It may prove of interest to seek an answer to these questions.

We may discuss the subject from two different points of view: first, from the historical standpoint, inquiring what light is thrown upon the introduction of music into religion by an examination of the practices of primitive peoples; and, secondly, from the theoretical or aesthetical standpoint, inquiring what there is in the nature of the art that makes it such a valuable ally to religion.

First, then, of the use of music in earliest times. Is there any light thrown upon the question by the usage of primitive peoples? Some think to find a clue in such a practice as that of the Chinese, who used to beat tom-toms and rattle chains to frighten the dragon which was supposed to be swallowing the sun or moon during an eclipse. In the same way the wild music of Bacchanalian and other festivals is supposed to have been intended to terrify the demons. A simpler theory seems to be that music is designed to draw the attention of the deity to the presence of the worshipper. In Num. x. 9, 10, the people are commanded, when they go to war, to blow an alarm with trumpets, that they might be remembered before the Lord their God. The sound of the trumpet

calls Jehovah's attention to the need of His people. It was a kind of magnified prayer. For that was the earliest idea of prayer—an actual crying aloud to the deity to draw his attention to one's necessity. Silent prayer, the prayer of the heart, was a later development. Eli thinks that Hannah is drunken when he hears no sound from her lips (1 Sam. i. 13). Doubtless one reason, then, for the introduction of music into worship was to reinforce the voice of the worshippers, that the cry of the people for help might more certainly reach the ears of the deity.

Such may have been some of the grounds upon which music was at first enlisted in the service of religion. The ideas and beliefs upon which such employment of music rests are gross and childish, and gradually gave place to something better. But music had secured its place in worship, and continued to be employed although the conceptions which had occasioned its introduction had long since passed away.

And now let us turn to look at the subject from the aesthetical standpoint, and consider some of the grounds upon which the art is fitted to render valuable service to religious worship.

One explanation of the place assigned to music in divine worship seems to lie in an essential characteristic of the art dependent upon the nature of the sensuous material, sound, with which it works. When we compare music with the plastic arts, we find that in contrast to them there is a lack of permanence in its productions. The architect and the sculptor, for instance, produce actual objects which endure. Men may come and men may go, but the church or the statue remains there for ever. But music produces no such permanent objects. The material with which it works is sound, and that passes away in the very moment of

its being. Music is not a thing that endures. It must ever be renewed from time to time. Now is it not in this respect admirably fitted for use in public worship? For is not this feature of continual renewal the very essence of the act of worship? We build our churches once for all, but we do not feel that when we have done that we have done all that is necessary for the worship of God. Worship is not a thing that can be done once for all. It must ever be renewed. We may have our permanent forms drawn up for public or private worship. But these things do not constitute worship any more than the score of the musical composition constitutes music. That merely contains the possibility of music, and in order that that possibility become actuality it is necessary that the tones represented by the written symbols be sounded. In like manner, we must make the words of the printed page throb with the feeling of our own soul before the form of prayer in our hands becomes a living act of worship. This characteristic of music, then, that its productions are not things which have permanent existence but fleeting tones which have their being only in their utterance, makes it admirably fitted for worship where likewise we have to do not with permanent things but with fleeting emotions which long to find expression.

Another reason that may be given for the place music occupies in church worship is that music is of all the arts the one that appeals most directly to the feelings. The realm of feeling—that is the domain of the musician. The poet and the artist too, no doubt, make their appeal to the feelings. But their appeal is not so direct, not so immediate, as in the case of the musician. The poet appeals in the first place to the imagination, and only through it to the feelings. The artist places before us a representation of the world around us, and through it makes appeal to the feelings. But the

musician's appeal is to the feelings direct. It is his own feelings that he gives utterance to in the stream of sound he pours forth. It is the feelings of the hearer that he seeks to awaken by the strain he sounds. These words which Beethoven inscribed on the Kyrie of his Mass in D are characteristic of the spirit of all true music: "From the heart it has come, may it reach the heart again!" We all recall the case of David playing before Saul and driving away the evil spirit by which the King was possessed. It is only an extreme instance of the power to act upon the feelings, which all music more or less possesses.

"What passion," asks Dryden,[1]

> "cannot Music raise and quell?
> When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
> His listening brethren stood around,
> And, wondering, on their faces fell
> To worship that celestial sound:
> Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
> Within the hollow of that shell,
> That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
> What passion cannot Music raise and quell?"

And the same poet in his striking Ode on Alexander's Feast has described the power of music "to swell the soul to rage or kindle soft desire" with a vividness which lends to his own verses something of the power of the music he describes, showing how the musician who sang before Alexander at the feast in Persia could play upon the soul of the monarch as if it were a musical instrument, and awaken now defiance, now love, now revenge, as he pleased. There are few poems which give such masterly description of the power of music.

Music, then, appeals to the feelings, and it is the feelings that are the important factor in religious worship.

[1] *St. Cecilia.*

Some theologians would reduce religion altogether to a matter of feeling. We may protest against any such doctrine, and yet recognise that so far as the act of worship is concerned feeling is the factor of supreme importance. For worship is not the assent of the reason to certain doctrine, but the expression of the deep devotion of the heart. If the feelings be not brought into play, if our heart do not thrill within us in response to the appeal made by the form of worship employed, then so far as we are concerned no worship has taken place. If music, then, can aid in this appeal to the feelings, if it can touch the heart and help to kindle those deep emotions which find outlet in the act of religious worship, we can understand why it should have been selected to play such an important part in the worship of the Church.

But further, not only does music appeal to the feelings generally,—it seems specially fitted to awaken those feelings which seek satisfaction in religious worship. We are all familiar with the feeling which makes us ask, when we have heard a piece of profound music, "What does it mean?" It is a question which it would be rash to attempt to answer, for if we could express in any mere words what the music utters there would be no need for the music at all. "If you ask me what I was thinking of," said Mendelssohn[1] in reply to some such question, "then I say, precisely the song as it stands there." Mendelssohn indeed had a peculiar theory that the reason why we could not say in words what is expressed in music is that the music is not too indefinite but too definite. Words, he thought,[2] were capable of a variety of meanings, but music had only one. I question if many musicians would subscribe to that theory. We should rather say the very reverse, that the thought which music

[1] *Letters*, Oct. 15, 1842. [2] *Ibid.*; cp. July 1831.

expresses is too indefinite, too profound to find adequate expression in words. And it is just because of this that music seems peculiarly suited for employment in religious worship. The deepest cravings of our being, the yearning for the infinite, the thirst of the soul for some object that shall satisfy it—these, the feelings which seek satisfaction in the act of religious worship, seem to find expression in the strains of solemn music which give "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," and awaken yearnings too profound to find utterance in words. "In man," says Jean Paul,[1] "there is a great yearning that is never satisfied. It has no name; it seeks its object, but all that you name to it, and all joys are not that object. But it comes again, this yearning, when on a summer night you look towards the north, or towards distant mountains, or when moonlight is on the earth, or the heaven is covered with stars, or when you are very happy. . . . This yearning, to which nothing can give a name, our strings and tones name to the human spirit. The yearning spirit weeps then more freely and cannot contain itself, and with plaintive rapture cries out amid the tones: 'Yes, all that you name to me, that do I lack!'" It is because of this characteristic that music is so peculiarly fitted for employment in divine worship. It seems to raise us above the things of sense, to waft the spirit into a purer atmosphere, where all meaner cares and baser thoughts are forgotten. It gives utterance to that deep craving of the soul for something, it knows not what, that yearning which finds its full satisfaction only in religion.

And in another respect music seems admirably suited to express those feelings which seek satisfaction in religious worship. For music is the channel whereby the joy of the heart naturally finds expression, and

[1] *Hesperus.*

among the feelings which animate us in our worship of God, not the least prominent is the joyful gratitude which fills the heart under the consciousness of the divine goodness. Praise is an outstanding feature of divine worship—praise to God for all His goodness and mercy. It is with joy that we enter the courts of God's House. It is joy that is the dominant note throughout our public worship. And when our hearts are full of joy it is natural for us to burst into song. Perhaps it is here that the origin of music is to be found, in the rude shouting in which the exuberance of the heart found outlet. Be that as it may, from the earliest times music has been associated with rejoicing. Whenever there was occasion for mirth, the sound of music would surely be heard. What more fitting than that the feelings of joy which filled the heart in one's relation to God should find similar expression, and that in the House of God, even as in the home, men should give utterance to the rejoicing of the heart by bursting into song? Almost all the references to sacred music in the Bible are in this spirit. "The Lord is my strength and my shield," says the Psalmist (Ps. xxviii. 7), "my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him." The singers whom David appoints are described as "lifting up the voice with joy" (1 Chron. xv. 16). In Hezekiah's time the Levites "sang praises with gladness" (2 Chron. xxix. 30). The psalmody of the sanctuary is invariably bright and cheerful. Music is felt to be the natural expression of joy. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James v. 13).

Once more, there is another very obvious reason why music should have a place in church worship—the readiness, namely, with which it associates itself with language to give expression to feeling. No two arts

are more closely connected than music and poetry. In joining the two together we do not feel as if we were making any artificial combination, but rather as if each were thereby realising its true function. The human voice is the only natural musical instrument, and perhaps one of the most perfect; and if we are to employ it, the poet must supply it with words. And, on the other hand, the song which the poet has written does not seem to attain its end till it has been wedded by the musician to sweet melody. That music, then, should from the earliest time have been introduced into the praise of the sanctuary is only what might be expected. It supplies what is wanting in the song of praise which the poet has composed. It is the natural and spontaneous utterance of those feelings of joyful gratitude to which the poet has given articulate expression. It thrills the verse of the poet with emotion, and makes the dead words live on the lips that pour them forth in song.

One other reason we may give for the introduction of music into church worship—the attractiveness of the art and the universality of appeal that it makes. There are few who are not susceptible to its influence, few who are "not moved with concord of sweet sounds." Surely it was a very wise and proper course to introduce an art so attractive into public worship! Luther used to object to the devil getting the best of the tunes. It would have been still worse if we had allowed him to get hold of all music whatsoever, and had made it taboo in the Church. To take that in which the human heart found delight and consecrate it to the service of God—surely that was a piece of wisdom which it would have been well if the Church had followed in other cases as well! It may be that, as a mediaeval Church writer has it,[1]

[1] Rabanus Maurus, quoted Hooker, v. 38. 3.

the music of the Church was made more melodious in the interests of the less spiritually minded who did not feel the appeal of the mere words of Scripture, in order that the sweetness of the melody might make some entrance for good things. If that be so, we can only say with St. Basil (quoted *ibid.*): "O the wise conceit of the heavenly Teacher, which hath by his skill, found a way, that doing those things wherein we delight, we may also learn that whereby we profit!"

We cannot better close this introductory chapter than by quoting the words of (Pseudo-) Justin Martyr regarding sacred song:[1] "It excites the soul to fervent desire of that which is celebrated in the songs; it soothes the vicious appetites arising from the flesh; it drives away the evil thoughts that are inspired in us by invisible enemies; it irrigates the soul so that it becomes fertile in divine goods; it makes the champions of piety brave and strong to endure adversity; it is to pious men the medicine for all the ills of life." If such be indeed its power, then there is little wonder that music holds the place it does in public worship.

[1] *Quaest.* 107.

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS MUSIC BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN ERA

In almost all cultured peoples the first use that is made of music is in the service of religion. The Chinese have their ancient temple music; the Hindus their hymns of remote antiquity sung at the sacrificial feasts of their gods; on the Assyrian monuments we find representations of musicians at the performance of the sacred rites; and the command in Daniel (iii. 4 f.) to fall down and worship the golden image at the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, testifies to a like practice on the part of the Babylonians. It may prove of interest to consider more closely the place that music held in religious worship among some of the ancient peoples. We shall confine ourselves to the two which have had the greatest influence on the history of mankind, the Greeks and the Jews; prefacing what we have to say of the latter by a few words about the Egyptians, with whom they were brought into close contact at the beginning of their history.

Among the Greeks music was held in the highest esteem. They took a most serious view of its power. It was thought to exercise a great influence on the formation of character, and its cultivation played an important part in education. It was held by Plato to

be the gift of the gods to man, and to suppose that it was intended merely for pleasure was to him rank blasphemy.[1] Indeed he went the length of asserting that where there was licence in the music, the result would be anarchy in the state.[2] These beliefs as to the influence of music upon character depend in great measure upon the view entertained by the Greeks that music was the most imitative of the arts. That is precisely the opposite of what we should say, for there is nothing in the external world that music seeks to represent. But when the Greeks called music imitative they were thinking not of the world of nature without, but of the world of feeling within, to which it was thought the movement of the music corresponded. "In rhythms and melodies," says Aristotle,[3] "we have the most realistic imitation of anger and mildness, as well as of courage, temperance, and all other opposites." Hence melody, even apart from the words, was supposed to have ethical quality. It reflected certain types of character, and by reaction had considerable influence on the moulding of character. Some kinds of music were degrading, others elevating, in their tendency. Plato would admit only certain of the musical modes into his Republic.

So far as to general question of the estimation in which music was held among the Greeks. To come to the practical, we meet with various forms of music in connexion with the worship of the various gods. There were the sacred hymns sung at the religious ceremonies of divine worship, during the solemn procession to the temple, or the performance of the sacrifice, or at the libation (*spondē*). It is interesting to note that the metre used at this last, which was composed exclusively of long feet, has given its name to the spondee, the foot

[1] *Laws*, ii. 655. [2] *Rep.* iv. 424.
[3] *Pol.* v. 5. 1340b, 18.

of two long syllables. In the same way the Molossian foot derived its name from the fact that hymns in this metre were sung at the temple of Zeus at Dodona, on the borders of Molossia. Then there was the *paean* sung in honour of Apollo, of which we read in Homer, where it is sung at the sacrificial feast to propitiate the anger of the god,[1] or to celebrate victory over the enemy.[2] In later times it appears to have been used as a song of battle, and sung in honour of other gods as well as Apollo. Then there was the riotous music in connexion with the worship of Cybele in Phrygia, at which the celebrants to the sound of the flute—an instrument regarded by the Greeks as specially stirring—and other instruments danced about in wild excitement, working themselves up to a frenzy. From its association with this orgiastic worship the music in the Phrygian mode was regarded as of a specially soul-stirring character. Then there were the *dithyrambs* sung at the festivals of Dionysus, at which also there was music of the flute, in contrast with the worship of Apollo, where the lyre was the instrument used. The chorus which sang the dithyramb danced in a circle round the altar on which the sacrifice was offered. These dithyrambs are specially interesting, because to them is to be traced the origin of Greek tragedy, which also falls to be mentioned in the present connexion. To our notions it may seem strange to refer to tragedy in connexion with sacred music, seeing that it is neither sacred nor is it music; but to the Greek it would fall under this category. It was *sacred* in its origin, for, as we have seen, it was the development of the lyric songs which were sung at the worship of Dionysus, probably descriptive of the sorrows of the god. It was also *sacred* in its association, for to the end it was performed only at the festivals in honour of Dionysus.

[1] *Iliad*, i. 473. [2] xxiii. 391.

And it was *music*—sacred opera Prof. Blackie calls it;[1] for while we may draw a hard-and-fast line between music and poetry, it was not so with the Greeks. By them poetry, music, and dancing were grouped together as the "musical arts," with this feature in common that rhythm was the controlling factor.[2] The dramatist had to be a master of music and dancing as well. So we are justified in reckoning Greek tragedy as one branch of the sacred music of the people.

We may note in passing how characteristic of the genius of the two nations, the Greeks and the Jews, and of the influence they have exerted on the world, is the form in which sacred song in each attained its highest development: with the Greeks, the people of culture, in that tragedy which remains to this day a fountain of inspiration to the dramatist; with the Jews, the priesthood of mankind, in that Book of Psalms which will continue to the end of time to be the sacred song-book of the world.

We might mention one other form of sacred music which is of interest because it is not peculiar to Greece but is to be found among the neighbouring Asiatic peoples—the song of mourning sung for the death of some beautiful youth. Such, for instance, are the song of Linus sung at the grape-picking, the lamentation for Hylas with which the Bithynians made the hills resound, the mourning for Maneros which Herodotus heard in Egypt, the mourning for Adonis, the beloved of Aphrodite, slain by a wild boar. The youths lamented in these songs are not historical persons, but represent some season of the year, probably spring, which is destroyed by the heat of summer. It is interesting to note that we meet with a reference to the lamentation for Adonis

[1] *Horae Hell.*, p. 77.
[2] Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry*, p. 132.

in Ezek. viii. 14, where women are represented as sitting in the temple weeping for Tammuz. This Tammuz was originally a Babylonian god, addressed as Adonai (Lord), whence came the Greek name Adonis. The lamentation for him is described by Milton—

> "Thammuz came next behind
> Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
> The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
> In amorous ditties, all a summer's day,
> While smooth Adonis from his native rock
> Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
> Of Thammuz yearly wounded." [1]

To turn now to Egypt, we are told by Plato [2] that the Egyptians had a tradition that their ancient chants which had been handed down through the ages were the compositions of Isis. Two of the forty-two sacred books of the priests were devoted to hymns in praise of gods and kings. An indication of the sacred character of much of the music of the Egyptians is afforded by the fact that as a general rule the musicians who are represented on the frescoes all belong to the priestly class. Families in which the art was hereditary were attached to the temples. One of the chief features of Egyptian religious worship appears to have been the solemn procession headed by musicians playing upon all sorts of instruments and followed by priests chanting their hymns to the god. Just as the Greeks had their mystical representations of the sorrows of Dionysus from which tragedy arose, so according to Herodotus [3] similar mysteries were performed at Sais to commemorate the sufferings and death of one whose name he refuses to mention, presumably Osiris. Doubtless there would be music at this representation also.

It is natural to suppose that the Israelites appropriated

[1] *Par. Lost*, i. 446. [2] *Laws*, ii. 657. [3] ii. 171.

something of the music of the people in the midst of whom they dwelt so long, and that Moses, who "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii. 22), may have acquired some of their musical culture. The timbrels with which Miriam and the women accompanied their song of triumph over the destruction of Pharaoh's host (Exod. xv. 20) are frequently represented on Egyptian monuments. The stringed instruments in vogue among the Hebrews may have been modelled upon some of the various forms of harp that we meet with in Egyptian paintings. And though Josephus[1] attributes the invention of the Hebrew trumpet to Moses, it is more probable that he adopted the similar instrument in use in Egypt. But the references to music in the Pentateuch are too rare for us to draw any conclusions as to the character of the art as practised at the time of the Exodus, or the extent of the indebtedness of the Hebrew nation to their Egyptian oppressors. Let us turn rather to consider generally the place that music occupied in the religious life of the Jews and the use to which it was put later in the service of the Temple, of which we have fuller information.

It was an art that was held in high esteem. It is recorded as one of the merits of the fathers of the race that "they devised melodies of music" (Sirach xliv. 5). On occasion the musician is put on the level of the prophet. The musicians set apart by David to the office are spoken of as prophesying (1 Chron. xxv. 1); Heman is called "the king's seer in the words of God" (*ibid.* 5). The susceptibility of the Hebrew nature to the power of music is instanced in the case of Saul, who is now stirred to ecstasy, now soothed and refreshed in mind by the strains of the musician (1 Sam. x. 5, 10; xvi. 16 ff.). When Elisha desires to have the prophetic

[1] *Antiq.* III. xii. 6.

spirit awakened in him he calls for a minstrel, and during his playing "the hand of the Lord came upon him" (2 Kings iii. 15). Music appears to have been largely practised in the schools of the prophets. We meet a company marching along, presumably on some religious pilgrimage, to the sound of music (1 Sam. x. 5), and when the several messengers sent to take David prisoner at Ramah are described as being themselves carried away by the Spirit when they see the prophets prophesying, the "prophesying" in question was probably stimulated by music (1 Sam. xix. 20 ff.). No doubt it was under the influence of the prophets that David came to give music such a large place in religious worship. Indeed in a later record he is expressly declared to have acted in obedience to the commands of Gad and Nathan (2 Chron. xxix. 25). He was an enthusiastic musician himself. He had been brought as a lad to play before Saul because of his skill on the harp (1 Sam. xvi. 16 ff.). He was said to have invented some musical instruments (1 Chron. xxiii. 5; Amos vi. 5); and tradition has assigned to him the composition of a great portion of the Psalter. But how large a part he played in the arrangement of the musical ritual of the Temple it is impossible to say. According to the Book of Chronicles, he is responsible for the whole elaborate programme of Temple music there set forth. But the earlier records know nothing of this; and while we may readily believe that David was instrumental in giving music its place in the religious service of the sanctuary, we may still hesitate to accept the details set forth in Chronicles as historically reliable. We have only to compare the account of the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem as given in 2 Sam. vi.—a scene of simple popular rejoicing with music and dancing—with the account given in 1 Chron. xv. of the solemn procession of priests and

Levites, and the elaborate musical arrangements for the occasion, to realise that the evidence of the later narrative on such points of ritual must be accepted with caution. The Chronicler is prone to date back to the time of David the religious institutions of his own day, and his account of the musical arrangements made by David is therefore open to criticism. Remembering this tendency of the later record, then, we may hesitate to accept in its fulness the detailed account it gives of the musical arrangements made by David. But if it is not always to be relied on as evidence of what held good in the time of David, it is valuable at any rate as showing the arrangements that were in vogue in later times. To gain information regarding this, let us turn, then, to the account given in Chronicles.

On the occasion of the bringing up of the ark David is said to have appointed Asaph, Heman, and Ethan, or Jeduthun, conductors of the bands of singers and players which he gathered together, and which were composed exclusively of Levites. At first Asaph and the company allotted to him performed at Zion before the Ark, Heman and Ethan in the Tabernacle at Gibeon (1 Chron. xvi. 37 ff.), but afterwards they were all engaged in the Temple, and appear to have formed three guilds, each called by the name of its chief. The total number of performers is given at 4000 (1 Chron. xxiii. 5), but according to another account (1 Chron. xxv. 7) there were 288 masters of song, divided into 24 groups of 12 each. The instruments employed in the Temple worship appear to have been cymbals and two kinds of stringed instruments, rendered in our versions as "psalteries and harps," about the precise character of which there is considerable difference of opinion. There was but the one pair of cymbals, on which the conductor beat time, while the stringed instruments seem to have been

in the proportion of 8 psalteries (*nebel*) to 6 harps (*kinnor*) (1 Chron. xv. 19-21). In addition there were the trumpets which were played by the priests alone. The performers appear to have had their station at the east end of the altar (2 Chron. v. 12).

Such are the arrangements as to the musical service—assigned for the most part to David. After the Exile the Levitical singers belonging to the various guilds, who had settled in villages round about Jerusalem (Neh. xii. 28 f.), were restored to their office, and provision was made for their support (Neh. xi. 23, xii. 47, xiii. 10 ff.). Indeed it is probable that musical arrangements in the second Temple were more elaborate than in the first, and that many of the details concerning the musical service before the Exile are borrowed from the arrangements that prevailed in later times. As time went on the musical service of the Temple seems to have gained a stronger hold on the heart of the nation. The Talmud contains a list of Psalms appointed to be sung on each day of the week at the morning sacrifice. They were as follows, beginning with Sunday: xxiv., xlviii., lxxxii., xciv., lxxxi., xciii., xcii.; and the various festivals had their appointed Psalms, *e.g.* Ps. lxxxi. for the New Year, or possibly the Feast of Tabernacles, Ps. xxx. at the Festival of the Rededication of the Temple after its pollution by Antiochus Epiphanes. In proof of the esteem in which the Temple musicians were held down to the latest times, we may quote the fact that Agrippa II. granted their petition to be allowed to wear linen garments of the priests.[1]

Let us try to gather some idea as to what was the nature of the musical service in the Temple. Here is the description of the service under Hezekiah: "And the Levites stood with the instruments of David" (*i.e.*

[1] Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. ix. 6.

cymbals, psalteries and harps) "and the priests with the trumpets. . . . And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished" (2 Chron. xxix. 26-28). According to this account the music was introduced during the sacrificial meal. It would also be employed during the solemn procession, and in later times it would probably come to form an independent part of the service. It appears also that the trumpets and stringed instruments all accompanied the singing together. And such seems to have been the case also at the great celebration at the Dedication of the Temple, where we read that "the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord" (2 Chron. v. 13). But these seem to have been exceptional cases. As a general rule the accompaniment to the singing was given only by the two kinds of stringed instruments with the cymbals to mark time, and perhaps the occasional addition of the flute. The trumpets did not play along with the other instruments, but came in at pauses in the rendering of the Psalm, *e.g.* the Psalms performed at the daily offering had nine, or some think three, divisions between which the trumpets were sounded.

The Psalter is composed of the hymns of praise used in the service of the Temple. Many of the Psalms have at their head the names of some of the musical guilds connected with the Temple—Asaph, Korah, and the like—indicating that they have been taken from the collections used by these guilds. If we could interpret the various musical directions contained in the Psalms, we should be able to form a better idea of the nature of the Temple musical service. But for the most part these are unin-

telligible, and no conclusions can be drawn from them. Even with regard to one of the most common, "Selah," there is considerable difference of opinion. One common interpretation is that it is a sign to indicate the beginning of an interlude of instrumental music at certain points in the singing of the choir. There are some who contend that the instruments did not accompany the singing at all, but only alternated with the voices. But that does not seem probable in view of the Hebrew phrase "instruments of song" used to denote the instruments employed. Probably we have to think of the instruments which accompanied the singing striking in with a louder interlude at the point marked Selah, with perhaps the occasional intervention of blasts of the trumpets.

The singing was for the most part performed by the Levites alone, the congregation occasionally joining in with responses such as Amen, Hallelujah (1 Chron. xvi. 36; Ps. cvi. 48), For His mercy endureth for ever (Ps. cxxxvi.; cp. Jer. xxxiii. 11). There do not appear to have been female voices in the choir. In Ps. lxviii. 25 we do indeed read of damsels playing on timbrels in a religious procession, but in the Temple itself they seem to have had no place. Much of the singing would be antiphonal, sometimes between solo and choir, sometimes between two separate choirs. One would like to know whether in the antiphonal rendering of the Psalms the verses were sung alternately by the two choirs, or each broken up into two parts, sung antiphonally, thus preserving the parallelism of the poetry. Some of the Psalms gain in impressiveness when we think of the manner in which they would probably be rendered at first. Thus, for instance, the opening verses of Ps. xcv. are a processional hymn sung by a company approaching the Temple, who fall on their faces at the words, "Let us worship and

bow down"; verses 3-6 of Ps. xxiv. may be regarded as a dialogue between a company of worshippers who approach the Temple and a priest standing at the gate to receive them.

We can only conjecture as to the character of the music performed. There is no reason to suppose that the Jews had any knowledge of harmony. The various instruments would all play the melody in unison or in the octave with the voices. None of the ancient Hebrew melodies has been preserved, unless, as some think, the so-called Gregorian tones preserve some relics of them. From the indications given by the headings of some of the Psalms it seems probable that some of the melodies employed were familiar as those of songs, *e.g.* Ps. xxii. "upon Aijeleth Shahar" = to the tune of "The hind of the morning"; Ps. lvii. "Al-tashheth" = "Destroy not," probably the commencement of a song, cp. Isa. lxv. 8. But, as we have said, the whole question of the superscriptions and musical directions of the Psalms is an obscure one. From what we know of the melodies of the East we may conclude that there would be no great variety in the Hebrew music, but that it would be a kind of monotonous recitative within very moderate compass. To our taste probably the melody would be uninteresting in the extreme; and the combination of the various instruments and voices all performing in unison to the clang of the cymbals, with occasional blasts of the trumpets, does not suggest a musical performance that would make any appeal to us. But our musical taste is a matter of education. The higher forms of music were only gradually evolved. To the Israelite these Temple songs were familiar from long association; around them were entwined most sacred memories; they spoke to the heart with most tender pathos. It added poignancy to the grief of the Exile that they could no longer sing the songs of Zion

(Ps. cxxxvii. 4). The heart of the pious Israelite yearned for the worship of the Temple, and not the least attractive feature of that worship would be the musical service. To him it seemed the height of bliss to dwell there and praise Jehovah all day long (Ps. lxxxiv. 4). And when his desire was granted and he stood in the holy place; when he heard the swelling stream of tone pouring forth from the company of musicians echoed by the glad Hallelujahs of the assembled multitudes; when the priests pealed out their blasts on the trumpets flooding the whole building with sound and almost making the very walls to shake; would it not seem as if the miracle recorded at the Dedication of the Temple were repeated, as if with the rolling volume of the music the glory of the Lord like a cloud filled the House of God (2 Chron. v. 14)?

CHAPTER III

PSALMODY IN THE APOSTOLIC AND ANCIENT CATHOLIC CHURCH

As music had played an important part in the services of the Temple, so it had its place in the worship of the Christian Church from the very beginning. Our information as to the method of procedure in the gatherings of the Christians in Apostolic times is not so full, indeed, as we might desire. Still from occasional references in the New Testament we can form some idea of the main features of the worship of the Early Church. In Acts ii. 42, 46 f., *e.g.*, we have a description of the conditions in the Jewish Christian Church. Evidently it is a picture of the everyday life of the Christians rather than of any formal religious services. "And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God" (46 f., R.V.). There is no express mention of singing here, but doubtless it is included in the "praising God." Our Lord and His disciples had sung a hymn at the Last Supper (Mark xiv. 26). And although that was probably part of the established order of service at the Paschal celebration, still it was natural that the feelings which filled the hearts of the Christians as they thus joined together "in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42) should find

expression in song. "Is any merry?" says James (v. 13), "let him sing psalms." In their "gladness and singleness of heart" these Jewish Christians were in the spirit to sing.

Doubtless the worship of the Early Church would be in great measure determined by the practice of the synagogue. Unfortunately there is some doubt as to whether praise constituted any part of the regular worship there. If it did, and it was the practice to employ the Psalter for the united singing of the congregation, then we may believe that the old Psalms in which the thanksgiving of the Israelite found expression would be carried over into the worship of the Jewish Christian Church, and sung with an added fervour under the deeper gratitude which flooded the heart for God's mercy in Christ. In addition to these there would likewise be free outbursts of praise on occasion, such as we read of in Acts iv. 24-30.

To come to the Gentile Christian Church, we know from what Paul tells us that singing, like prayer, was part of the ordinary worship (1 Cor. xiv. 15-26). There is no explicit mention of united singing by the congregation. Perhaps we may take it for granted, and conclude that for this purpose the Old Testament Psalms would be used. The form which the music took in the meetings Paul describes in the Corinthian Church was the singing by one of the brethren of a psalm of praise as the Spirit moved him (1 Cor. xiv. 26), while the congregation associated itself with the sentiments uttered by the formal Amen (*v.* 16). Such psalms were not borrowed from the Old Testament, but were original productions under the influence of the Spirit, perhaps improvised on the spot. There are several specimens of such compositions in the New Testament. The germs of them may be seen in the doxologies scattered throughout

the Epistles. More elaborate examples are the ascriptions of praise in Rom. xi. 33 ff. and the hymns of the Apocalypse, which has been well called "the Psalm-book of the New Testament." Some of the examples in the Apocalypse are suited for singing by the congregation as a whole, and it may be that they were employed in public worship. Such a hymn, for instance, as Rev. xv. 3 (R.V.):

> "Great and marvellous are Thy works,
> O Lord God, the Almighty;
> Righteous and true are Thy ways,
> Thou King of the ages.
> Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?
> For Thou only art holy;
> For all the nations shall come and worship before Thee;
> For Thy righteous acts have been made manifest;"

may well have formed a part of the congregational praise. It is interesting to note, too, that in the Apocalypse the psalm of praise is occasionally broken up into strophes, which are assigned to different choirs (*e.g.* v. 9-14), an anticipation of the antiphonal singing which afterwards came into general practice in the Church. It may be that the description of the praise in heaven is based upon the practice in vogue in the Church on earth, and that even at this date the singing was more or less antiphonal. In his famous letter to Trajan the younger Pliny says that the Christians used "to meet before daylight on a fixed day, and sing by turns a hymn to Christ as God." The *by turns* seems to suggest some kind of antiphonal singing.

The mention of Pliny brings us beyond the Apostolic age, and we turn now to give a description of the part music played in the worship of the Early Church during the succeeding centuries.

First, as to the text which supplied the subject-matter

for the psalmody of the Church. The place of honour was assigned to the Psalter. It became the hymn-book of the Church, and held as warm a place in the heart of the Christians as ever it had done with the Jews. Here there was something to meet every want, something to suit every mood. "If thou art in need of repentance or confession," says Athanasius; "if sorrow or temptation befall thee; if any one has endured persecution or has escaped by hiding; if any one is sad or troubled, or if good fortune has returned to him; if the enemy is conquered, and he wishes to offer to the Lord praise, thanks, and glory—for all this he can choose material enough from the Psalms, and offer to God what they contain as his own work." Here was breathed forth the yearning which Christ came to satisfy, here was the prophecy of which He was the fulfilment. The Psalms were sung on all occasions. "If the faithful are keeping vigil in the church," says Chrysostom, "David is first, middle, and last. If at dawn any one wishes to sing hymns, David is first, middle, and last. At funeral processions and burials, David is first, middle, and last." Jerome portioned out the Psalter into seven parts so that each day of the week might have its appointed number of Psalms. The whole Psalter was committed to memory, and cases are on record of refusal to ordain to the priesthood where such knowledge was lacking.

But the Psalter was not the only portion of the Bible used for praise in worship. A selection was made of the lyrics in other parts of Scripture suitable for this purpose. One of the oldest MSS. gives a list of such canticles at the end of the Psalter. It contains such numbers as the Song of Moses after crossing the Red Sea (Exod. xv.), the Prayer of Hannah (1 Sam. ii.), the Prayer of Jonah (Jonah ii.), and also some lyrics from the Apocrypha. Nor was the Church confined to texts from Scripture.

The early Christians composed hymns of their own. We have seen how free composition was permitted in the Apostolic Church. The practice was continued, and such hymns had their recognised place in public worship. This introduction of original compositions sometimes led to abuse. The heretics took advantage of the practice to spread their doctrines. Augustine complained about such conduct on the part of the Donatists, but saw the advisability of fighting them with their own weapons, and composed a long hymn as a counterblast to their errors. It may have been these heretical abuses that led the Council of Laodicea in the fourth century to prohibit the use of "private psalms" in the Church. The prohibition seems to have been without effect, and the practice became generally established.

Among the hymn-writers in the ancient Catholic Church we must mention Ephraem Syrus, one of the most distinguished hymn-composers of the East, and specially memorable because of the rhythmical structure of his hymns, in which respect he became a model to those who followed him in the Greek and the Latin Church. Hilary and Ambrose followed in his footsteps, the latter securing such popularity by his productions that a species of hymn-writing soon arose which was known as the Ambrosian. Some of Ambrose's hymns are still extant.

Public worship usually opened with praise. Indeed the worshippers seem sometimes to have filled up the time during the assembling of the congregation with the singing of psalms. It was the practice, as with ourselves, to introduce singing between the various items of worship, so that, as Augustine says, they had singing whenever there was no reading, or praying, or preaching. Psalms sung between the readings were called "responsory psalms," either because they were sung in *response* to the lesson which preceded them, or, as seems more probable,

because of the manner of their performance, a solo voice singing first and the choir *responding*. Some Psalms were assigned to particular occasions, *e.g.* Ps. lxiii.: "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee," to morning service; Ps. cxli.: "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice," to evening; and Ps. xxii.: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" to the day of the Saviour's Passion. As a general rule, however, the Psalms were sung through in the order in which they occurred in the Psalter; but in addition it was the custom for the bishop or precentor to introduce any Psalm at discretion. When the soldiers surrounded the church at Alexandria in which Athanasius was holding a vigil, he ordered the deacon to read the 136th Psalm, and all the people to respond with: "For His mercy endureth for ever." Sometimes the chance selection of a Psalm was regarded as providential. When Martin was proposed for the bishopric of Tours, his chief opponent was one named Defensor. It so happened that the reader for the day was unable to be present, and one of the bystanders took his place and selected Ps. viii. by hazard. And when he came to the words: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the *defensor*" (for so the last word was rendered in the Gallican Version), this was accepted by the people as an omen, and the intrigues of the Defensor party were frustrated.

There were different methods in which the Psalmody was rendered. Sometimes the whole congregation joined in. Ambrose compares the church to the sea as it reverberates with the sound of the chanting. "Women and men, old men and children," says Chrysostom, "differ in sex and age, but they differ not in the harmony of

singing hymns; for the Spirit tempers all their voices together, making melody of them all." There were some, indeed, who interpreted the Apostle's injunction that the women should keep silence in the churches as applying to psalmody as well as teaching, and forbade them to take part in the chanting. One Father suggested as a compromise that they should moderate their voices so as not to be heard. A later writer thought that they should be permitted to sing on the ground that otherwise their love of gossip might lead them to talk during the service. But seeing the permission had not had the desired effect, he proposed that it should be withdrawn. In spite of these scruples, however, they seem generally to have taken part in the singing.

Sometimes the Psalms were sung by one person alone, and according to one authority this was the most ancient method. But generally when a solo voice was employed, the congregation responded. The precentor began by singing the title, which was regarded as an integral part of the Psalm, and to which the preacher sometimes referred. The response of the congregation took various forms. Sometimes they sang alternate verses with the precentor. At other times they repeated the concluding words of the verse. This was called "singing the acrostics"—acrostic, which usually means the beginning of a line, signifying also the end of it. More frequently they struck in from time to time with a fixed refrain. We have already met with a case of that in the Psalm sung at Alexandria on the occasion of the attempt to seize Athanasius, when after each verse the people responded with the refrain: "For His mercy endureth for ever." And in the case of the hymn composed by Augustine against the Donatist errors, which was divided into alphabetical sections like the 119th Psalm, after every section the

people sang the refrain: "All ye who delight in peace judge now aright." Sometimes the refrain was limited to a simple Amen or Hallelujah.

There is still another method of performance to which we must refer. In place of the precentor and the congregation thus alternating with one another, the congregation was divided into two choirs which sang alternately. When the whole congregation sang the Psalms together without any division into separate choirs, it was called singing "in symphony," and that method of performance was termed "direct." But when the congregation was divided into separate choirs which sang alternately, that was called singing "in antiphony." In the antiphonal rendering of the Psalms the choirs seem to have sung alternate verses, not half-verses, which one might think would better do justice to the parallelism of the Hebrew poetry. Legend ascribes the introduction of this antiphonal singing to Ignatius, who is said to have seen in a vision choirs of angels singing praise to the Trinity in alternate chorus. But the fact is that it had already been practised in the Jewish Church, and was probably carried over into Christian worship from the beginning. As we have seen, some of the hymns of the Apocalypse are antiphonal in character. This manner of singing seems, however, to have been slow of being introduced into the Western Church. Augustine tells us that it was Ambrose of Milan who first instituted this singing of praise "after the manner of the Eastern Church," at the time of his persecution by the Empress Justina (386). His faithful people were keeping watch in the church with their bishop, ready to die with him; and Ambrose introduced this antiphonal method of chanting, "lest the people should faint through the tediousness of sorrow."[1]

[1] *Confessions*, x. 7.

The congregation stood at the singing. They were led by a precentor who occupied a raised platform. At first he was distinct from the reader, though later the offices were combined. Some seem to have aspired to lead the singing who had not been called to this work, for the Council of Laodicea forbade all save the canonical singers, "who mount the platform and read from the parchment," to sing in church. Presumably this prohibition applied only to solo singing. From at least the fourth century boys' voices were employed in the singing, and schools of song were established for their training. Many distinguished Churchmen received their early education in these schools.

As to the music, doubtless it would be very simple at first, little more than a kind of recitation with occasional modulation of the voice within the compass of a note or two. Probably the first steps in the direction of more elaborate melody would be taken by the precentors in the performance of the solo to which the congregation sang the refrain. This offered scope for freer melodic embellishment. By the time of Augustine this side of the psalmody had attained a certain richness and beauty, for the saint was much distressed as to whether the sensuous charm of it might not prove a seduction to him. He acknowledged that he was more touched by the holy words when thus sung. Yet he feared that this was a contentment of the flesh which might enervate the soul. And he fluctuated, he says, "between peril of pleasure and experience of profit, inclined the rather to approve of the usage of singing in the Church, that so, by the delight of the ears, the weaker minds may rise to the feeling of devotion. Yet when it befalls me to be more moved with the voice than with the words sung, I confess to have sinned, and then had rather not hear

music."[1] The leaders of the Church were alive to the danger which threatened from the introduction of profane music. Clement of Alexandria had as firm a conviction of the debasing tendency of certain kinds of music as Plato, and contended as vigorously against the introduction of such music into the Church as Plato against its admission to the State: "Only modest and discreet melodies are to be admitted; while, on the other hand, weak and enervating tones are to be avoided. For with their impure and artificial intervals they lead men on to an over-refined and effeminate course of life; on the other hand, sober modulations, tending to self-restraint, do not encourage intoxication and dissoluteness."

Instruments were not used in public worship. Probably they were to the minds of the Christians too closely associated with worldly enjoyments and heathen celebrations to be tolerated in divine worship. "Our cithara," says Eusebius, "is the whole body, by whose movement and action the soul sings a fitting hymn to God; and our ten-stringed psaltery is the veneration of the Holy Ghost by the five senses of the body and the five virtues of the spirit." The movements and actions of the body, which Eusebius thus regards as the fitting accompaniment to the song, were sometimes interpreted in a more literal fashion than he desired; and we read of places in which the hymns were accompanied by clapping of the hands and dance movements, much to the indignation of the leaders of the Church.

The method adopted in the performance of the psalmody was that which we know by the name of Plain Song, of which we must now give a brief description. Plain Song differs from the music with which we are familiar—what is called measured music—in respect of Rhythm and Tonality. First, as to *rhythm*.

[1] *Confessions*, x. 33.

In measured music there is a fixed rhythm, with the accent recurring at regular intervals. Dance music and marches are types in which the rhythm is brought prominently before our notice. The accent falls inexorably at regularly recurring periods, and if we wish to put in more notes in the interval, we must hurry them over in order to be ready for the accent. But in Plain Song the music was not measured out in this fashion. It was called Plain from the equality and evenness of its movement. There was no hurrying along to be ready for the accent. For the accent was variable and made to fall so as to suit the words. The contrast between the two is similar to that between verse and prose. In verse there is the same rhythm ever recurring, the feet all of the same length, so many to the line. In prose the constraint of such regular rhythm is absent. The rhythm here is irregular, dependent upon general laws of proportion and symmetry rather than upon any rigid formula. Consequently measured music is more suitable for accompanying verse, Plain Song for prose. With such variability of accent in Plain Song it was possible to do full justice to the time-value of the syllables. They were not cut short here and lengthened out there to fit the Procrustean bed of the music. The music was accommodated to the words, not the words to the music.

In the various modes melodies were composed to serve as chants for the Psalms. These were the so-called Gregorian Tones (*i.e.* Tunes). The structure of the Plain Song chant was as follows: Intonation, Reciting Note, Mediation; Reciting Note, Ending. The Intonation was a short phrase of melody sung to the opening syllable of the first verse. The first half of the verse was chanted to the first Reciting Note, the second half to the second. The Mediation and the Ending were short melodious phrases with which the first and

the second half of the verse were rounded off. In each Tone the Mediation was always the same, subject to slight occasional alteration to suit the words; but some of his Gregorian Tones had two or three different Endings.

Next, as to *tonality*. By tonality we mean the relation one to another of the notes which occur in any melody, in virtue of which it is said to be in a certain key. It is rather difficult to explain in what respect the tonality of Plain Song differed from our music without going into technicalities. So perhaps it will be better to relegate the details to a note at the end of this chapter. It will suffice to say that the peculiarity of the tonality of Plain Song lies in the way in which the tones and semitones are arranged in the various modes, as they are called. We have only two modes nowadays, the major and the minor, and though we have a variety of keys, the arrangement of tones and semitones in major and minor modes respectively never alters. But in the old ecclesiastical music there were several modes, each with a different arrangement of tones and semitones. This offered a rich variety of material to the musician to work with, for it was felt that the various modes had each a distinct character making it suitable for the expression of a certain class of feeling. One was felt to be suited to grave, sublime subjects, another was sorrowful, another bright and joyful, another sweet and tender; and with this rich variety at his disposal, the musician had a vehicle admirably suited to express the various emotions of the soul. Certain it is that the melodies which this system of Plain Song has given birth to have a marvellous charm, and that after the lapse of the centuries they still fall upon the ear with an unfading freshness, and in their sweet simplicity touch the soul with a directness that cannot be gainsaid.

NOTE ON CHAPTER III

THE MODES OF PLAIN SONG

In Plain Song, as is said in the text, the position of the tones and semitones varies in each mode. We have still relics of some of these old ecclesiastical modes in our popular music. The song "Up in the morning early" is in one of them. The first ascending passage of that song is a scale in the Dorian mode. The Psalm tune Martyrs is in the same mode.

Let us note the arrangement of tones and semitones in the different Plain-Song modes. They may be readily understood if one plays the scales on the pianoforte keeping to the white keys. If one starts with C and plays up the white keys, the result is our familiar major mode. It is as follows—the semitones are marked by the curve above:

C D E⌒F G A B⌒C

That scale was not employed in ancient Plain Song. It was thought to be too wanton. Now let us start with the next white key D, and play up the white keys. Then with E and do the same, and likewise with F and G. We get the following four modes:

I.	D E⌒F G A B⌒C D	DORIAN
II.	E⌒F G A B⌒C D E	PHRYGIAN
III.	F G A B⌒C D E⌒F	LYDIAN
IV.	G A B⌒C D E⌒F G	MIXOLYDIAN

It will be seen that the semitones come in at a different point in each mode. These were the so-called Authentic modes of Plain Song, and they were named respectively as indicated above. The names were taken from the old Greek music, but somehow confusion arose, and the names were wrongly assigned, the Dorian mode, for instance, being called the Phrygian by the Greeks. Why they were termed *authentic* is a matter on which there is difference of opinion. The most natural explanation is that at some time they were canonically recognised as the modes best suited for ecclesiastical music. Tradition has it that Ambrose of Milan either introduced them or gave them official sanction, and they were sometimes called Ambrosian Tones.

In addition to these four authentic modes, four others, called Plagal, *i.e.* oblique, were afterwards introduced, and the credit for this is assigned to Gregory I. These plagal modes were just variations of the authentic ones. The final—what we should call the key-note—remained the same, and the place of the tones and semitones was unaltered. The only difference was that the compass within which the melody ranged was different. In the authentic Dorian mode, *e.g.*, the melody would lie between D and D. But in the relative plagal mode it did not ascend above A in the middle of the scale, and to compensate for this it was permitted to descend to A below the D, *i.e.* it ranged from A to A thus:

A B⌒C D E⌒F G A

but D was still the final, and the tones and semitones were still as in the Dorian mode. To give familiar examples of authentic and plagal melodies, the Psalm tune London New is authentic, the Old Hundred is plagal. The plagal modes, then, began four notes below the final or key-note of the authentic, the plagal to the Dorian on A, to the Phrygian on B, to the Lydian on C, and to the Mixolydian on D. Each plagal mode was named after the authentic on which it depended, the plagal to the Dorian being called the Hypodorian, and so on; and the modes were now renumbered, the authentic modes being the odd numbers, the plagal the even. The resulting table of modes was as follows:

		Range.	Final.
I. DORIAN	Authentic	D to D	D
II. HYPODORIAN	Plagal	A ,, A	D
III. PHRYGIAN	Authentic	E ,, E	E
IV. HYPOPHRYGIAN	Plagal	B ,, B	E
V. LYDIAN	Authentic	F ,, F	F
VI. HYPOLYDIAN	Plagal	C ,, C	F
VII. MIXOLYDIAN	Authentic	G ,, G	G
VIII. HYPOMIXOLYDIAN	Plagal	D ,, D	G

CHAPTER IV

MUSIC OF THE OFFICE AND THE MASS

TRADITION has ascribed to Gregory I., who was Pope from 590 to 604, so large a part in the ordering of the music of the Roman Liturgy that the whole system of chanting which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages has come to bear the designation Gregorian Chant. This Gregory is of special interest to us in this country, as it is he who is the hero of the well-known "*Non Angli sed angeli*" story, and to whom England owes its evangelisation. As to his musical work, he is reputed to have composed, or rather compiled, an Antiphonary, *i.e.* a collection of liturgical music, to have settled the Order of the Mass, and to have founded a school of singers at Rome. Doubt has been cast upon the tradition, some claiming the honour for Gregory II. (715–731); but the tendency of recent investigation has been to confirm it. In this chapter we propose to give an account of the musical service in connexion with the Divine Office and the Mass, according to the Roman Liturgy, and thereafter to trace some of the later developments of the music of the Mass.

We may begin by giving a brief description of the institution of the Divine Office. It was an attempt to realise what was felt to be the ideal, that the whole life of the Christian should be one continual communion with God, and every hour consecrated to His service.

Its origin is probably to be found in the vigils or night assemblies to which the Christians had to resort in early times to escape observation. Such vigils would be held at first on the night preceding the Lord's Day — no doubt the "fixed day" referred to by Pliny in his letter to Trajan—and at the close of the vigil the Lord's Supper would be celebrated. Then it became the custom to hold vigils in preparation for Easter and other festivals. The vigil lasted the whole night, but three periods of prayer were specially emphasised, sunset, midnight, and sunrise, with the corresponding offices, Evensong, Nocturns (afterwards called Matins), and Lauds. In course of time other days were added to the sacred days on which vigils were kept, until at last in monastic institutions vigil was celebrated every day. To these Night Offices daily prayer was afterwards added, and the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours were set apart for devotions. The observance of these hours was borrowed from the Jews, but they received added solemnity from the events which fell on them on the day of the Saviour's Passion: at the third, His trial; at the sixth, His crucifixion; at the ninth, His death. To these hours were afterwards added the first and the last hours of the day, with the Offices of Prime and Compline, and the Canonical Hours, as finally settled, were: Matins (with three Nocturns), Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Evensong, and Compline. The music performed at the Office was partly of the responsorial, partly of the antiphonal, order. The former (which, as was explained in last chapter, consists of solo with chorus refrain) predominated in the Night Office, and was associated with the reading of the lessons, as if to remind the hearers, says an old writer, that they were to be not merely hearers but doers of the Word. In the Day Office the responsorial method of chanting was

quite overshadowed by the antiphonal, which constituted the main feature of this Office. The prominence of antiphonal psalmody in the Day Office has been explained on the ground that this Office originated in monastic institutions, where antiphonal singing was greatly in vogue. In the performance of the chant the two choirs, which in the Office were composed not of professional singers but of clergy and monks, stood facing each other. The Psalm to be rendered was prefaced by an Antiphon, *i.e.* a sentence designed to bring the thought expressed in the Psalm into relation to the particular occasion on which it was sung. The same Psalm might be sung, for instance, at Easter and Christmas and other Feast-days. In themselves, of course, the Psalms had no direct reference to the events of the Christian dispensation. The feelings they expressed were more or less general. The Antiphon brought before the mind of the worshippers the facts commemorated by the celebration in which they were engaged, and suggested the special application to these circumstances of the sentiments of the Psalm. The Antiphons were taken either from Scripture or from the ancient Catholic literature. Originally the Antiphon was repeated after every verse of the Psalm, making the performance a kind of Rondo with the Antiphon as the recurring theme. Sometimes there were several Antiphons introduced into the singing of the Psalm or Canticle. Here is an example of a peculiar treatment of the Antiphon, viz. the intercalation of the narrative of the Resurrection in the Magnificat appointed to be sung at Vespers of Easter Eve:

Antiphon	Canticle
In the end of the Sabbath, etc.	My soul doth magnify the Lord.
And behold there was a great earthquake.	And my spirit, etc.
For the angel of the Lord, etc.	For he hath regarded, etc.,

and so on to the end of the Canticle, the incidents of the Resurrection being interspersed as a series of Antiphons between the verses of the Canticle. In course of time it was found that the singing of the Antiphon after every verse unduly lengthened the service, and ultimately it was performed only at the beginning and the end of the Psalm. This was the method finally authorised by the Council of Trent.

In addition to the Psalms, hymns also found their place in the Office. These were for the most part metrical in form, in the free style of the popular poetry which substituted rhythm and accent for the strict laws of quantity which ruled Latin poetry. Sometimes rime also begins to appear. These hymns became so popular that they threatened to oust the Psalms and Canticles from the Office, and aroused hostility which found expression in the decisions of certain Church Councils that only Scriptural praise should be permitted. But in spite of this they held their ground, and gained a firm place in popular esteem. Some of the old hymns used in the Office were non-metrical. Among this class the familiar Te Deum deserves special mention. Its authorship is uncertain. It was sung antiphonally verse by verse, usually at the conclusion of the third Nocturn on Sundays and Festivals. It took the place of the Gloria in Excelsis as the hymn suitable for occasions of general thanksgiving and rejoicing.

Let us now turn to the Mass. Its musical side consists of a series of chants which fall into two groups, those which were originally Psalms or parts of Psalms, and those which were hymns, or at any rate hymn-like in character. The psalmodic group has varying texts, and so these chants were called the *Proprium* of the Mass, because they were *proper* to the day or service. This group includes the Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, Tract,

Offertory, and Communion. The other group, which comprises the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, has always the same text. It was called the *Ordinarium* of the Mass. In the psalmodic group we find the same variety in respect of musical execution as in the Divine Office. Sometimes the performance is in the responsorial method, a solo voice alternating with a choir which renders the refrain, as in the Gradual and the Alleluia, sometimes in the antiphonal, the choir being divided into two parts which answer each other, as in the Introit, Offertory, and Communion. The Tract was sung as a solo without refrain by the choir. In course of time the Ordinary became the more important part of the Mass from the musical point of view, and came to monopolise the name of "the Mass." It is rather a striking fact that this, the least characteristic feature of the Mass liturgically, should have attained such prominence. It may partly be explained, as Prof. Wagner suggests,[1] by the fact that when Gregory XI. and his singers went from Avignon to Rome in 1377, they took with them the harmonised chant which was in vogue in France, and from that time it became the custom to sing the chants of the Ordinary in harmony. Here lay the germ of the whole future development of the music of the Mass. The new art was destined quite to overshadow the old method of chanting.

It may be of interest, before we proceed to consider the rich musical development which the Mass underwent on this side, to give a brief description of the several parts which we have named above.

First comes the *Introit*. It was so called from the approach of the priest to the altar. When the candles were lighted and all was ready for the celebration of the Mass, the singers took their place before the altar, and

[1] *History of Plain Chant*, p. 54.

the leader intoned the Antiphon to the Introit. Then the Pontiff with his retinue came into the church, and the choir proceeded with the rendering of the Psalm, repeating the Antiphon after each verse. When he reached the altar and had adored the Host, the Pontiff gave a sign to the leader to start the Gloria, and returned to his seat. The whole concluded with the Antiphon.

The *Kyrie eleison* ("Lord, have mercy") followed next. It was appointed to be sung not by the choir but by all present, and was at first a simple recitative chant. Later on the choir appropriated it, and the simple syllabic melody, which had suited the capabilities of the congregation, gave place to something more elaborate. One device for securing more musical scope was to prolong the last syllable of the word *Kyrie* in a melodic phrase suggestive of entreaty. In later times short texts, called *Tropes*, were provided for this expansion of the melody.

The *Gloria in Excelsis* ("Glory to God in the highest") was sung in Mass at first only on Christmas Day. Afterwards it was introduced on Sundays and other occasions. The celebrant started it as a solo, and the clergy assisting at the altar responded, *Et in terra pax* ("and on earth peace"). The chant was of the simplest character, being little more than a kind of musical recitative.

Next came the chants between the lessons. Originally there were three lessons, from the Prophets, the Epistles, and the Gospel, and between these lessons chants were introduced, the *Gradual* between the first and second, and the *Alleluia* or *Tract* between the second and third. The prophetic lesson was afterwards abandoned, but the two chants were still retained. These chants were responsorial in character, and were of great antiquity. They formed an integral part of the service, not being introduced like some of the other musical items in the Mass, such as the Introit, the Offertory, and

the Communion, to fill up time during the lengthy ceremonies. The *Gradual*, which came first, originally consisted of a whole Psalm sung by a solo voice with responses by the congregation. The soloist stood on the steps (*gradus*) of the raised platform—whence the name. The performance of a whole Psalm was found to occupy too much time, and the psalmodic portion was reduced to a single verse. There were different methods of performing the Gradual. According to a writer of the ninth century, the following was the method in Rome. The precentor first sang the Responsory to the end. The succentors (*i.e.* the singers who responded to the precentor) did the same. The precentor then sang the verse, and the succentors again sang the Responsory right through. Then the precentor sang the Gloria, and the succentors took up the Responsory about the middle and sang to the end. Lastly, the precentor sang the Responsory right through, and the succentors did the same. In later times the practice of repeating the Responsory after the verse was given up.

The Gradual was followed by the *Alleluia*. Originally the single word Alleluia was sung by itself. Gregory added one or two verses from the Psalms. The soloist began by singing the word Alleluia, and the choir repeated it. Then he sang a verse or verses, and after each verse the choir responded with Alleluia. Although the text of the response was confined to the single word, it was extended over a melody of considerable length, as if, says one liturgist, to give utterance to the joy that was too great to be expressed in speech. In later times verses called *Sequences* were provided for the long-drawn-out melody at the end of the Alleluia, just as the Tropes were added to the Kyrie.

The Alleluia was a song of joy. In times of mourning and penitence its place was taken by the *Tract*,

which was always a solo chant without response or antiphony.

The *Credo* was also introduced between the lessons. The form used was the Niceno-Constantinopolitan. It seems to have been late before the Creed found a place in the Roman Mass. The story goes that when the Emperor Henry II. was in Rome, in 1014, he asked the Romans why they did not sing the Creed. They replied that as the Roman Church had never been tainted with heresy the need for it did not exist. But at the request of the Emperor the Pope agreed to its introduction. It is included in the Masses of Sundays and Feast-days. It is not performed by the choir but by the celebrant and his attendants at the altar. Consequently the music is a simple syllabic recitative.

We come now to the offering of the sacrifice, the commencement of the Mass proper. After the catechumens have left, the celebrant begins with the salutation, *Dominus vobiscum* ("the Lord be with you"), and then invites to prayer, an invitation still retained, although the prayer which followed it has disappeared. Then the faithful present their offerings of bread and wine—not only the laity but all the clergy, even the officiating Pope himself, bringing their gifts—and while these are being received the *Offertory* is sung. This practice of bringing offerings was at first general. It disappeared early in the East, but was retained in the Latin Liturgy for a long time. The Offertory was a solo chant to which the choir sang the Antiphon between the verses. Being a solo, it gave scope for considerable musical adornment, and in connexion with it we meet with a practice which was destined to become a most valuable instrument in the hands of later composers, the occasional repetition of words and phrases. The chant was continued till the celebrant gave a sign to the singers to break off.

The next musical item is the *Sanctus*, which divides the Eucharistic prayer into two portions, the Preface and the Canon. Originally it was precented by the celebrant and taken up by the congregation, and so the melody was simple. But when it fell into the hands of the trained singers, more elaborate music was composed. The *Benedictus* was originally merely the conclusion of the Sanctus. But when the latter was made so elaborate musically, the Benedictus was not introduced till after the Consecration.

The *Agnus Dei* ("Lamb of God") was of comparatively late introduction. It was originally sung by people and clergy at the breaking of the Body of the Lord, but later it was usurped by the singers of the choir. It was usually sung three times, and the last time the concluding words, *miserere nobis* ("have mercy upon us") were altered to *dona nobis pacem* ("give us peace"). As in the case of the Sanctus, the music, which was originally simple, became more elaborate when the rendering was taken over by the choir.

The last musical number is the *Communion Antiphon.* It had been the ancient custom to sing Ps. xxxiv. 8, "O taste and see," during the celebration. But later the text was varied from day to day, and each Mass had its own communion text. The method of performance was as in the Introit. Verses of the Psalm chosen for the text were performed alternately with the Antiphon. The number of verses depended on the duration of the ceremony. When it was ended, the celebrant gave the sign and the Gloria was sung, and the whole ended with a final rendering of the Antiphon.

Such were the various portions of the Mass which received a musical setting. In the Gregorian chant the whole of the music was sung in unison. Harmony and counterpoint were still undiscovered arts. The power of the music lay partly in the contrast, which holds through-

out the whole of the liturgy, between responsorial and antiphonal chanting, but above all in the devotional spirit and haunting sweetness of the melodies, which endow them with a perennial charm, and make them appeal to the heart to-day with as moving pathos as when they were first composed.

The introduction of the organ into the church led to certain changes in the performance of the Mass. It was only slowly that it secured admission. We think of it as an instrument peculiarly suited for sacred purposes, but originally it had been employed for worldly, frivolous music, and in proof of the manner in which it was regarded, it is reported as a sign of grace in a Gothic king that no organs were to be heard at his court. There is evidence of its introduction into church about the beginning of the eighth century, and by the eleventh, almost all the cathedrals and larger churches were supplied. The instruments were originally very defective and clumsy, having only ten keys which required to be pressed down with the fists, whence the phrase "to beat the organ." By the fifteenth century the pedals had been added, and the instrument greatly improved. There had been considerable opposition to its introduction into church. Thomas Aquinas had protested against instrumental music of any kind as savouring of Judaism. Some tolerated it on the ground of the appeal that it made to the weaker brethren. Many complaints were raised against the abuses it gave rise to. Worldly and lascivious melodies were introduced into the Mass, and sometimes the organ cut short some part of the service by striking in too soon. A witness to the feeling against it remains in the fact that to the present day it is excluded from the Pope's Sistine Chapel.

The manner in which it was employed was peculiar. We should think that the natural course would have been

to make it accompany the choir. There is proof, indeed, that it was sometimes so employed, but that was not the common usage. As a general rule choir and organ did not perform together but alternately. First the organ preludised to give the tone. Then the choir or the priest would render one part of the Mass, then the organ would play another. Thus, for instance, in the Kyrie eleison, the choir began by singing "Kyrie eleison," and the organ played the second part "Christe eleison." And so on with the other musical numbers, with the exception of the Gloria, which was given to the choir alone: they were performed in alternate strophes by choir (or priest) and organ. The text for the verse played by the organ was either recited or sung by a chorister. The organ seems seldom to have been used as accompaniment to support the choir, but generally in alternation with it or the priest.

The further development of the music of the Mass came with the substitution of part-singing for the chanting in unison which had hitherto obtained. The first attempt at part-singing was crude in the extreme. It consisted in one part singing the melody at a fifth above or a fourth below the other. The explanation of the adoption of this method is probably to be found in the fact that when the voices are at that interval from one another, each can sing exactly the same melody as the other without modulation, but at a different pitch. The result to our ears is excruciating, yet ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages speak of the "sweetness" of the sacred *organum*, which was the name given to the added part. In course of time the intervals of the third and the sixth, which were at first abhorrent to mediæval ears, were admitted. When the writing was for two parts it was called Discantus or Biscantus. At first the added part had note for note to correspond to the

original subject, whence came the name counterpoint, *punctum contra punctum*, note against note. Gradually the practice crept in of giving the melody, the *cantus firmus*, to the lower voice, which was hence called the Tenor, and allowing the upper voice to indulge in a variety of embellishments. In these circumstances it was necessary that there should be some fixed standard of time in order that the voice which had the florid part should be able to keep with the other. And so the great step was taken of having music composed in regularly measured time. It will be recollected that one characteristic of the ancient Plain Song was the absence of any strictly recurring rhythm.

The method of composing for several voices that was adopted when once part-writing attained the fulness of its power was what is known as the *polyphonic*. POLYPHONY is that species of music in which two or more voices or instruments combine, each having a melody of its own so constructed as to blend with the melodies of the other parts into a harmonious whole.[1] It is contrasted with MONODY, in which the melody is given to one part alone, while the other parts contribute a mere harmonic accompaniment.

The chief school for the development of the polyphonic method was in the Netherlands, and great is the debt which music owes to the labourers who laid the foundation for the noble temple which was to be reared. It is an interesting fact, and one which we record with some pride in view of the charge frequently brought against us of being an unmusical nation, that the oldest piece of polyphonic music known—"the most remarkable ancient musical composition in existence," Sir F. A. Gore Ouseley calls it—is an old Northumbrian round in six parts: "Sumer is icumen in." It is believed to date

[1] *V.* Luther's description of polyphonic music, p. 64.

from the beginning of the thirteenth century, and so is about a century and a half earlier than the productions of the first Flemish School. But we know nothing of the further development of the art in England, and, as we have said, the Netherlands was the centre where it was brought to maturity. During the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries the art of polyphony made marvellous progress among the Flemish composers. We may mention the names of Josquin des Près, concerning whom Luther said that whereas other composers had to do what the notes made them, he made the notes do whatever he wished, and Orlando di Lasso, whose Penitential Psalms remain an eternal monument of his genius. But great as were the services of the Flemish School in the development of polyphony, it was reserved, not for it, but for an Italian to bring the art to the highest pitch of perfection, and the name of Palestrina will ever occupy the foremost place in the list of writers who have composed church music in the polyphonic style. In order to appreciate the enormous service he rendered to the art, we must realise how serious a crisis had been reached in the history of ecclesiastical music.

As we have seen, the music of the Mass falls into two groups—one with texts varying for each occasion, the *Proprium Missae*, and the other with texts which are always the same, the *Ordinarium Missae*. This latter group includes the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei; and it was upon it that the labours of the polyphonic school were concentrated. They had given it an elaborate musical setting, and the simple melodies of the Gregorian chant had been worked up into a highly complex musical production. The earlier Masses were generally based upon some fragment of Plain Chant, and the Mass became known by the

name of the chant upon which it was founded. But certain abuses began to creep in which caused grave misgiving to all who had the welfare of the Church at heart. The ingenuity of the Flemish School of composers had invented various kinds of musical puzzles and complications, and these were freely introduced into the music of the Mass, though quite unsuited for the purpose. With the increasing complexity of the music little or no attention was paid to the words. We remember how Augustine thought it a sin if ever he was more engrossed with the music than with the sacred text. That was now the normal condition. So little regard was paid to the words that the composers did not even take the trouble to write them under the notes, but simply put a "Kyrie" or "Sanctus," as the case might be, at the beginning, and left it to the singer to fit in the words as he pleased. Nay, sometimes they introduced strange words into the liturgy, and while one part sang the appropriate text, another would be singing something quite different. The consequence was that the hearer could make out nothing, and we can understand the reply which one of the cardinals gave to Pope Nicholas V., when he asked him his opinion of the music in the Sistine Chapel: "Methought I heard a herd of swine grunting with all their might without producing one articulate sound or word." There were other and graver evils of which complaint was made. Sometimes the composer, instead of basing his Mass upon some Plain Song chant, selected a secular melody, and in some cases frivolous and even indecent songs were chosen for the purpose. It is said that, to make matters worse, while the choir were engaged in singing Masses of this kind, the congregation would join in with the words of the song which they recognised as the *cantus firmus*.

These were some of the evils which the Council of Trent had before them when they took up the question

of the music of the Mass. Some members were of opinion that the best course would be to banish the more elaborate music altogether and retain the simplicity of the Gregorian chant. The Emperor, Ferdinand I., who was kept informed of the course of proceedings at the Council, intervened with the request that "while the more effeminate harmony was interdicted, the so-called figurate music should not be excluded, as it frequently excited the feeling of piety." It was decided to forbid all music that had any admixture of the lascivious or impure, and to leave it to the Provincial Synods to take steps to put an end to the evils that had arisen. After the close of the Council in 1563, the Pope, Pius IV., took the initiative, and appointed a Commission of eight cardinals to investigate the subject. They invited eight musicians from the papal chapel to assist them. It was decided to interdict the introduction of extraneous texts into the Mass, the adoption of secular melodies as themes,[1] and the composition of motets upon unauthorised texts. But when it came to the question of making the words of the sacred texts more intelligible there was difference of opinion. The musicians maintained that when the music was at all elaborate, and the parts followed one another in imitation, it was impracticable to make the words perfectly clear. It was decided to put the matter to the test, and Palestrina, who was the protégé of one of the cardinals, was commissioned to write a Mass which should satisfy the demands of the ecclesiastical authorities. He wrote not one Mass but three. We may well believe that he undertook the work under a deep sense of the gravity of the issue. *Domine, illumina oculos*

[1] It is interesting to note that in spite of this prohibition Palestrina published in 1570 a Mass based upon the secular melody, *L'homme armé*, which had already formed the theme of Masses by many previous composers.

meos ("Lord, enlighten Thou mine eyes"), was the motto he chose for the first of the Masses he produced. In the first two he keeps more or less to the style of the Flemish School, but in the third, the famous Missa Papae Marcelli, he gave free rein to his fancy, and soared to heights never before attempted. When the music was ready, it was performed before the cardinals. They were delighted, especially with the third Mass. Here, they felt, was the true type of Church music. Let composers keep this as their model, and there would be no need of revolutionary measures. When the Pope heard the third Mass, he is reported to have said, "This is the harmony of the New Song which John the Apostle heard in the triumphant Jerusalem, and of which another John (Palestrina's name was Giovanni) gives us an idea in his wandering Jerusalem."

After this crisis the place of polyphonic music in the ritual of the Church was secure. Palestrina was appointed composer to the pontifical choir, and produced a series of Masses and motets which have won for him imperishable fame. His compositions are the very perfection of vocal religious music. "This is Church music," said Hauptmann,[1] "and all other music is something different." There is a charm about it which will never grow old. The means employed are of the simplest. The discords introduced are few and carefully prepared. There is no striving after effect, no tearing a passion to tatters, no appeal to the sensuous. All is solemn, and calm, and peaceful. Aristotle thought of tragedy as driving out pity and fear by the very excitation of these feelings. That is not Palestrina's method. He purges the soul of the emotions that disturb it by wafting us to a purer atmosphere where all the cares and turmoil of earth are forgotten. Heaven itself seems to open before us,

[1] *Letters*, Dec. 27, 1834.

and we taste a peace and rest of spirit such as earth cannot supply. "As long as religion and religious emotions last," says Sir H. Parry,[1] "Palestrina's music will be the purest and loftiest form in which it has been expressed."

Before we pass from the Mass it remains to speak of two other immortal works inspired by this portion of the liturgy of the Church—Bach's Mass in B minor and Beethoven's Mass in D. It is rather a striking fact that it should have fallen to a Protestant, nay, to one whom Mendelssohn's father fitly described as the musical representative of Protestantism, to produce a Mass which stands in the very front rank among compositions of this class. But we must remember that the Mass had still its place in the Lutheran Church. Luther was a reformer but no revolutionary. He clung to the old forms of worship, and sought to inspire them with the new spirit. He retained those portions of the Mass which contained no reference to the act of sacrifice, substituting the sermon for this. Bach's Mass moves on a different plane from Palestrina's productions, and it is unjust to compare the two. It is too long, and conceived on too grand a scale, for performance at worship. But it stands there to remind Protestants of what they have sometimes been apt to forget, that the roots of their religion go deep down into the soil of past history, that the Church to which they belong is a branch of the great Catholic Church, and that while there are many points on which they differ and have been compelled to separate from the Mother Church, there is still a grand, solid body of doctrine, dealing with many of the essentials of the faith, on which they are still at one. With loving and reverent care Bach seeks to gather up this precious inheritance from bygone ages, and to give it final expression. The result is a masterpiece of a sublimity

[1] *Studies of Great Composers*, p. 17.

and colossal grandeur almost unparalleled in the world of music, breathing such deep reverence and devotion that the very spirit of religion seems to find expression in it, a work which will remain to the end of time an imperishable monument to the genius and the piety of the composer. "Of Bach's compositions," says his biographer, Spitta, "everything else might be lost, the B minor Mass alone would testify unto remotest ages to the artist as with the power of a divine revelation."

The other great Mass which falls to be mentioned is the *Missa solemnis* in D by Beethoven. He designed it for the installation of the Archduke Rudolph of Austria into the Archbishopric of Olmütz; but though he began to work at it two years before the date of that event, the Mass was not finished till three years after it. Beethoven took infinite pains in the composition, which partly explains the delay. He immersed himself in ecclesiastical tradition; he studied the structure and prosody of the ancient chorales; he had the quantities of the Latin words of the text carefully marked. He set a high aim before him. He desired not merely to produce a work of art, but—to use his own words—"to awaken and make permanent religious feelings alike in hearers and singers." He himself declared that the Mass was the most perfect of all his works. Certainly there is none that gives a deeper insight into his personality. We have already quoted the inscription on the Kyrie: "From the heart it has come, may it reach the heart again!" The words apply, not to that number alone, but to the whole Mass. The deepest feelings of his heart find expression here as perhaps in none of his other compositions; and when a great soul thus gives utterance to its inmost thoughts, the result is a work which, by the intensity of its feeling and the profundity of its thought, can never fail to appeal to the human heart.

CHAPTER V

MUSIC IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

From the account we have given of the Gregorian music in the Catholic Church, it will be evident that there had been a tendency to withdraw participation in the music of the service more and more from the congregation and give it to the choir or the clergy. Ultimately the congregational contribution to the psalmody was reduced to the mere singing of the words "Kyrie eleison," which were repeated, it is said, as often as three hundred times during a single service. In Germany, however, the love of song native to the people had to a certain extent resisted this tendency, and the congregation claimed their part in the singing of some of the hymns. It became the custom to insert verses or phrases in the vernacular in the Latin hymns. Here, for instance, is the first verse of a well-known hymn treated in this way:

"In dulci jubilo
Our praises let us show;
Our heart's joy reclineth
In praesepio,
And like the sun He shineth
Matris in gremio
Alpha et O, Alpha et O."

In addition to this participation in the hymns sung at

divine worship there were likewise various kinds of religious song in vogue among the people. There were, for instance, the hymns sung by the pilgrims on their march, the popular songs in honour of the Virgin, the boatmen's songs, and the religious war songs. Further, hymn-singing had received encouragement among the various sects that had arisen, such as the Waldensians and the Hussites. In spite of a prohibition by the Council of Constance in 1415 the practice continued, and in 1504 a collection of hymns in use among the Bohemian Brethren was published.

Even before the Reformation, then, there was a certain amount of sacred song among the people. The practice had a zealous champion in Luther, who here, as in so many other directions, proved himself endowed with a sound instinct for what would appeal to the people. He was a musician of no mean power himself. He played the flute and the lute, he composed, he wrote a treatise in praise of music. He had the highest opinion of the dignity and the power of the art. "I am strongly persuaded," he wrote,[1] "and I say it boldly, that after theology there is no art that can be placed on a level with music; for besides theology, music is the only art capable of affording peace and joy of the heart like that induced by the study of the science of Divinity. A proof of this is that the devil, the originator of sorrowful anxieties and restless troubles, flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the Word of God." He early turned his attention to the reform of the Church services. He drew up a German Mass, and arranged for the people having their recognised place in the musical side of the service. He set to work to write and adapt hymns suitable for introduction in Church worship. "I wish," he wrote in 1524, "after the example of the

[1] Letter to L. Steufel, Oct. 4, 1530.

Prophets and Ancient Fathers of the Church, to make German psalms for the people, that is to say, sacred hymns, so that the Word of God may dwell among the people by means of song also." His hymns had such vogue that it was said by his enemies that he had destroyed more souls by his hymns than by his writing or preaching. In like manner he composed and arranged melodies for the hymns. He got two musical friends to come and assist him, and one of them has described how they sat at the table with music paper before them, while Luther walked up and down the room trying over on his fife the melodies that suggested themselves, and endeavouring to get them to fit the words. In this way he also set several of the Gospels and Epistles to music; and in view of what we have said about the difference in character of the various ecclesiastical modes, it is interesting to note that he chose the 8th Tone for the Epistles and the 6th for the Gospels. "For Christ is a gentle Lord," he said, "and His words are lovely: therefore let us take the 6th Tone for the Gospel; and since St. Paul is a grave Apostle, we will set the Epistle to the 8th Tone." He had no scruples as to plagiarism in his composition of sacred melodies. He acted upon the principle: "I pounce upon what is mine wherever I find it." Critics have shown that the hymn-tune "Ein feste Burg" is a patchwork of fragments of melody from various sources. Very probably. But it was a work of genius to combine these fragments into an organic whole. He said that he did not see why the devil should have all the good tunes, and freely adapted secular melodies to the service of the Church. Many of the most beautiful tunes in the German hymnody have been thus borrowed from the popular songs of the day. For instance, the melody of the chorale which occurs so often in Bach's St. Matthew Passion was originally a

love song. The Reformers felt that they were not only serving the Church by thus providing her with a store of melody, but also benefiting the people by putting sacred songs on their lips in place of the frivolous and sometimes indecent words they had been singing.

We propose to give a brief description of the music of the Lutheran Church service during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to trace the gradual evolution of that artistic form in which it reached its highest development, the Church Cantata. It is not an altogether easy matter to give a clear account of the musical conditions that obtained in the Church, seeing that the arrangements differed so much in different places. Luther had no desire to lay down any stereotyped order of service and insist on conformity to it. He was rather in favour of allowing different districts to determine the arrangements that were most suitable to their own conditions. And naturally the musical arrangements depended very largely upon the musical forces which the Church had at her disposal. What was practicable where there was an efficient choir would be wholly beyond the powers of a village church. In what follows we shall describe the service as it was rendered in the better-equipped churches, it being understood that when the assistance of a choir was not available, considerable modifications and abbreviations would take place.

Perhaps the first thing that many of us will have to do is to dismiss from our minds the picture which our imagination has painted of the condition of things liturgical and musical within the early Lutheran Church. With Luther's breach with Rome we fancy that there was a definitive abandonment of all Roman forms and practices. We picture to ourselves the Roman liturgy cast aside and a new form of service adopted: the Latin chants abandoned, and German hymns sung by the con-

gregation to the accompaniment of the organ substituted for them; the Catholic music of the Mass silenced, and an entirely distinct and novel style of Protestant music introduced. That is a picture which is false in almost every detail. The Roman liturgy was not cast aside, the Latin chants were not abandoned, the singing of the congregation was not accompanied by the organ, and for more than a century Catholic Masses were freely performed in the Lutheran Church. The changes in Protestant Church music came about much more slowly and gradually. As we have already seen, Luther did not set aside the service of the Mass. He retained it down to the Offertory, for which he substituted the Sermon. Nor did he banish the Latin language from the choral portions of the Mass. He thought it was an excellent exercise for the young to sing the Church hymns in Latin. We must remember that at that time Latin was the general language of culture. If there was any tongue that could claim to represent that universal language with which the Apostles were endowed at Pentecost, it was Latin. Perhaps it was something of this feeling that made Luther cling to it, while in the interests of the congregation he felt constrained to give them German words to sing. At any rate Latin still held its place in the musical service of the Mass, and the several hymns which were retained were sung by the choir in that tongue. They were the Introit, Kyrie with Gloria, Gradual with Alleluia, Credo, Sanctus and Agnus. But these Latin hymns did not constitute the whole musical portion of the service. In accordance with Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of believers it was indispensable that the congregation should assert itself. The people were there not merely to sit passive while the priest did something for them, but to take active part in the service. That is one of the dominant

ideas of the whole Lutheran liturgy. So a part was provided for them in the praise. German hymns to be sung by the congregation were introduced before and after the sermon, a practice which was imitated by the Catholics. Then further German hymns were associated with, or substituted for, some of the Latin chants of the Mass. The Credo, for instance, was seldom sung in Latin alone. It was the general custom to introduce here the popular paraphrase: "Wir glauben all' an einen Gott" ("We all believe in one God"). Likewise at the Introit and the Gradual, and during the celebration of Communion, it was the custom to sing congregational hymns in German. The manner in which these German hymns were associated with the Latin ones differed in different places. Sometimes the Latin and the German hymns were left side by side; sometimes the German was substituted for the Latin, the latter being retained for Feast Days; while sometimes congregation and choir sang alternate verses, the congregation in German and the choir in Latin.

It may be of interest to have a specimen of an Order of Service of Reformation date placed before us. Here is one from the Wittenberg regulations of date 1533, which we may be sure embodies the views of Luther himself on the subject. Every Mass is to begin with the singing, probably by the choir, of the German Benedictus with a short Antiphon. The following Introit is sung in Latin only "on occasions," *i.e.* probably Feast Days, but at other times may be replaced by a German hymn. The Latin Alleluia or Gradual, by the choir, is followed likewise by a German hymn, but if the service is too long, this hymn may be sung alone. The Credo is sung in Latin, and followed by the hymn: "Wir glauben all' an einen Gott," the Latin Credo being omitted if it is desired to curtail the service. After the sermon, "Da

pacem" is sung in Latin and likewise in German. When the preacher goes to the altar, either he reads German sentences and a collect, or a German hymn suitable to the season is sung. While the distribution of the elements takes place the choir sings the Sanctus and the Agnus, and the congregation follows with a hymn. At the conclusion of the distribution the congregation sings the German Agnus, "Christ, Thou Lamb of God."

As an alternative to the Latin Mass, Luther prepared also a German one "for the simple laity." Here in place of the Introit he substituted "a sacred song or a German Psalm *in primo tono*," *i.e.* a whole Psalm sung antiphonally in the first Gregorian Tone. Then came the Kyrie, but sung only thrice, not nine times as in the Latin Mass. The Epistle and Gospel were set to Gregorian Tones, and between them was sung a German hymn in place of the Gradual. After the Gospel came the paraphrase of the Credo: "Wir glauben all' an einen Gott." During the distribution of the elements there was sung either the German Sanctus: "It befell Isaiah the prophet," which was written by Luther for this purpose, or a hymn. Luther does not himself mention the Agnus, but it is probable that it was sung, in German form of course, at the close of the celebration. With the exception of the Kyrie, then, all the musical portions of the German Mass were rendered in German.

As to the manner of performance of these various portions of the psalmody, there were two different methods. The simpler was to sing the melody of the chant or hymn in unison. This was called singing *choraliter*. The more complex method, and one that could be carried out only where there was a highly trained choir, as, for instance, in the churches that had some singing school connected with them, was to work up the musical material into an artistic production in

motet form. This was called singing *figuraliter*. Let us consider these methods more closely.

Unison singing was the method suited to the powers of the congregation. They would be led, no doubt, by the choir, also singing in unison. The pitch was given by the organ, but it was not the practice at first to accompany the congregational singing with the instrument. The music of the psalmody was of two kinds, either the Plain Song chant to the liturgical texts, or the melodies composed for the German hymns. Though Luther was no great lover of the Gregorian Plain Song for congregational singing, he left certain numbers in the German Mass which would be so performed. But he wished something that would appeal more directly to the heart of the people. A mere translation of the liturgical texts did not satisfy him for words: the Gregorian melodies were not enough for music. He found what he wanted in the sacred folk-song already in vogue among the German people. Here, he felt, was the type of text that was suited to the mass of the people. Here was something which, coming from the heart of the nation, might reach its heart again. In 1524 appeared the first German evangelical hymn-book, and the first strains were sounded of that volume of sacred song which was to stir the heart of the German people to the depth. Of the composition of the music for the hymns we have already spoken, and have shown how anxious Luther was to secure melodies that would catch the ear of the people. With such words on their lips setting forth the great evangelical truths, with such simple melodies associated with them as would readily become familiar by repetition, Luther hoped that he had given the congregation an equipment that would enable them worthily to take their part in the service of God's House.

The tendency of Luther the Reformer was to banish

everything but the congregational song from the music of the service. Such had indeed been his original purpose in his first treatise on the reform of public worship. But there was another Luther, Luther the artist, Luther the musician; and this second Luther could not bring himself to exclude from the Church the higher forms of the art he loved so well. "I am not of opinion," he wrote, "that on account of the Gospel all the arts should be crushed out of existence, as some over-religious people pretend; but I would willingly see all the arts, especially music, in the service of Him who has given and created them." He was a great admirer of the polyphonic style of music, "where one person," to quote his admirable description, "sings a suitable melody or tenor (as the musicians call it), while three, four, or five other parts all sing along with it, which play and spring, as if in ecstasy, around this simple melody or tenor, and wonderfully adorn and grace it with manifold devices, and, as it were, perform a heavenly dance." A place was reserved for music of this kind in the portion of the Latin Mass which was allotted to the choir. The musical form which these numbers assumed was what was known as the MOTET. The motet was a form of Church music which had attained considerable vogue in the Catholic Church. Its characteristic features are that it is polyphonic, *i.e.* that each of the various parts which combine has a melody of its own, as described in the above quotation from Luther; that it is unaccompanied by instruments; and that it is based on a Bible text or a verse of a hymn. That, at any rate, was the character of the motet when it first became a recognised form of Church music, though afterwards the name came to be used loosely to designate other forms of vocal music. The motet had been a favourite form of composition in the Flemish School, and had secured a place in the

service of the Mass, either instead of, or immediately after, the Plain Song Offertory, which was found to be too short to fill up the time occupied by the priest in preparing the oblations. Such had been the motet, strictly so called, in the Catholic Church. But indeed the various numbers of the Mass were all really composed in this form, and the Mass was practically a collection of motets. In the Lutheran Church, whenever the music was performed *figuraliter*, it assumed this form. So it is evident that in the Mass of the Lutheran Church there was a considerable amount of music of a highly artistic kind. No discrimination seems to have been made between Catholic and Protestant compositions, and the Masses of Catholic composers were regularly rendered in the Lutheran Church.

As we have said, there was no thought of using the organ to accompany the singing of the congregation in the hymns. This may seem very strange to us, but it becomes more intelligible when we realise the conditions. There was no conception at this time of the art of accompanying the unison singing of the congregation with massive harmonies. Such a style of organ-playing had not yet been discovered. At this time all composition for the organ was on the model of vocal music. Here polyphony reigned. The melody was given to the tenor, and the other parts mingled in a sportive dance around it, in the manner Luther has described. Evidently there was little to support the singing of the congregation in music of this kind, where it required a trained ear to detect the tune of the hymn amid the bewildering wealth of melody interwoven with it, and where occasional liberties were taken with the original melody to meet the exigencies of its musical treatment. It may have been some loss to the Lutheran Church, in those early days, that it was deprived of the assistance of the organ

to support the singing, through ignorance of a style of using the instrument which only came later. But the Church has been more than compensated by the gain which accrued to the organ through its having to serve its apprenticeship, so to speak, in the polyphonic method. For here lay the secret of all its future attainment. The organ works of John Sebastian Bach are the development of the method of treatment which rendered the organ unsuitable for the accompaniment of the congregation; and what price shall sacred music reckon too high to pay for these immortal productions?

The organ did not, then, accompany the congregational singing. It began the service with a prelude, and at various points where it was required to give the pitch to the choir, gave a short preamble. It likewise struck in with a brief interlude between the various divisions or verses into which any of the choral numbers were broken up. And it was also the practice in the Protestant as it had been in the pre-Reformation Church, to have the organ playing verse about in alternation with the singing of the choir or congregation. While the organ thus played the music to a verse of the German hymn, some one read or sang the words of the verse in question. The hymn which took the place of the Credo was always, however, reserved for the congregation alone. In the antiphonal rendering of verses of the hymn with the congregation, the organ sometimes lent variety to the melody by working out a set of variations upon it. So long as the organ kept to the old polyphonic style of playing, there could be no question of its accompanying the congregation in the sense in which we understand the words. That did not come till the method of playing successive chords in place of a number of parallel melodies had been devised. When this style of organ playing was introduced, its suitability for accompanying the singing of the

congregation became apparent. We cannot be sure when the practice of combining organ and congregational singing came into general vogue. We meet with evidence of it before the middle of the seventeenth century. But it would only gradually gain ground, and even at the beginning of the eighteenth century we come across cases where the old method obtained.

We have seen that organ music written in the polyphonic style was quite unsuited for accompanying the congregation. For the same reason it was impracticable to support them by the singing of the choir in four or more parts. For the style of writing for the choir was the same as for the organ. The melody was given to the tenor, and from this fact, it is interesting to note, the other voices derive their names, the next higher being called the alto, the still higher the soprano, and the lower the bass. While the tenor sang the melody, all the other voices had melodies of their own. Plainly choir singing of this kind could not be of assistance in supporting the congregation. All the help that the choir could render was by singing in unison with it. Sometimes the choir would sing one verse in unison with the congregation, *i.e. choraliter*, and the next one by themselves *figuraliter*, or a whole hymn the one way and the next hymn the other. During the latter half of the sixteenth century there are complaints of the lukewarmness of the congregation in the matter of singing in church. They did not learn the new hymns readily. They were too much inclined to sit and listen to the choir, and in consequence the practice of giving more of the hymns to the choir to be rendered *figuraliter* seems to have been on the increase. In order to encourage congregational singing, Osiander, court preacher at Würtemberg, published, in 1586, a volume entitled "Fifty Sacred Songs and Psalms for the Churches and Schools in the worshipful

Principality of Würtemberg, set contrapuntally in four parts in such a way that a whole Christian Congregation can always join in them." In his preface Osiander explains that with the system that obtained of setting hymn-tunes to several parts, a layman unskilled in music could not join in, but must sit and listen. The melody being in the tenor, he could not be expected to follow it. But Osiander has devised the plan of giving the melody to the upper voice, and still keeping the polyphonic accompaniment of the other parts; so that he could claim that his arrangement of the hymns was still suited to *figuraliter* singing in the choir. The method adopted by Osiander found many imitators, and from this time onward, it became the custom to give the melody to the upper part. The idea was that the congregation should sing the melody, while the choir accompanied them by singing a more or less florid counterpoint. It was not an altogether happy solution of the problem of how to develop the singing of the congregation or to determine their relation to the choir. But it did serve to give a stimulus to congregational singing. The true support, however, of the congregation in the rendering of the hymns was to be found, not in a contrapuntal accompaniment by the choir, but in the massive harmonies of the organ, on the lines already indicated. We may note that it was not till after the time of Osiander that the name *chorale* began to be applied to the hymn. The designation hitherto in use had been *sacred song*.

It may be remembered that in speaking of the Mass in the preceding chapter we said that its chants fell into two groups, the Ordinary, in which the texts were always the same, and the Proper, with texts varying to suit the special occasion, whether a season of the Church year or some particular Saint's Day. The Catholic musicians

had concentrated their attention upon the former, and the various Masses composed by them had all the same texts. It is an interesting and suggestive fact that Protestant art found its inspiration in those parts of the service which changed with the season of the year and had a special bearing upon the Gospel of the day. A suggestive fact, because we seem to find here another evidence of that personal, individual note which is so characteristic of Protestantism as compared with Catholicism. In Protestantism, with its doctrine of justification by faith, the individual comes to his rights. He is not swallowed up in the Church, but stands on his own feet and realises his direct responsibility to God. We seem to see something of this feeling in the musical tendencies of the Protestant Church. The congregation find their voice as they had not done for long in the Catholic Church, and thrill the hymns with personal feeling. And here, in the selection of the texts upon which they are to work, the composers turn aside from the broad highway, which Catholic art had trodden, to strike out new paths for themselves, and forsaking the stereotyped themes, which had so long formed the subject of the Church's praise, find freer play for their individuality in the ever-changing topics presented by the Gospel of the day.

We notice this tendency in the hymnody of the Lutheran Church. Certainly some of the chorales were paraphrases of the Ordinary chants, *e.g.* "Wir glauben all'" of the Credo, "Allein Gott in der Höhe" of the Gloria. But from the very beginning hymns had been written with definite bearing upon the Gospel of the day, and therefore specially suited for certain seasons. In course of time every Sunday came to have its allotted chorales appropriate to the occasion, therefore called *cantica de tempore*, and these were chosen for perform-

ance as a matter of course, in contrast with the *cantica mobilia* (movable hymns) which were selected by the preacher or cantor. It became established tradition in the Lutheran Church for more than two centuries to confine the congregational praise, so far as the *cantica de tempore* were concerned, to a comparatively small number of chorales, consisting of all those by Luther and a selection from those of the first three decades of the Evangelical Church. We can well imagine what an influence this must have had on the religious life of the nation. The chorales became thoroughly familiar to the body of the people. The humblest peasant could take part in them. Here the truths proclaimed in the Gospel of the day were set before him in simple language and sounded in strains in which he could join. The chorales thus became woven into the very texture of the German character.

To leave the popular hymnody and come to the more artistic music of the Church, it was in that side of the service which corresponded to the Proper of the Mass that Protestant composers found the field in which to exercise their powers. Certainly the proportions of the Proper had considerably shrunk in the Lutheran Church. The Offertory and the Communion had been set aside from the beginning, and their place taken by the Sermon. The Gradual and sometimes also the Introit had been replaced by a German chorale. But there had been compensations. It had been the custom from the beginning to sing a chorale before and after the sermon. But gradually the practice had crept in of introducing a chorale during the sermon itself at the close of the exordium; and as the place of the Gradual had been taken by a chorale, it was felt that it was no longer necessary to make the singing before and after the sermon take

this form. So the music at these points was handed over to the choir, and took the form of motets. As they corresponded more or less to the old Offertory and Communion, the texts were sometimes taken from these parts of the liturgy. Another plan was to take the texts direct from the Bible, and as these motets came before and after the sermon, the natural course was to choose some text from the Gospel of the day, on which the sermon was based. Just as it was the custom to use the Latin texts of the Ordinary of the Mass, so it was also in the case of those motets which corresponded to the Proper. Even when the text was taken from the Gospel of the day, it was given in Latin. It was not till the beginning of the seventeenth century that it became the custom to use the text of the German Bible for these motets. As this side of the service which corresponded to the Proper of the Mass received increasing attention, the music of the Ordinary was curtailed, and it became the custom to reduce it to what was popularly called a Short Mass consisting only of Kyrie and Gloria, sung *choraliter* on ordinary Sundays and *figuraliter* on Feast Days.

We have seen how motets with texts suited to the season of the Church year or the Gospel of the day had come to find a place in immediate proximity to the sermon. Up to this point the influences under which this side of the musical service developed are to be found within the Lutheran Church itself. But for the evolution of the motet of this character into the cantata as we meet it in the hands of J. S. Bach we must go farther afield, and note the influence which Italian music came to exercise on German art. The centre from which this influence radiated was Venice, and the names of the musicians who shed lustre upon the city were Andrea Gabrieli (1510–86), Claudio Merulo (1532–1604), Giovanni Gabrieli,

nephew of Andrea (1557–1613), and Claudio Monteverde (1567–1643). Giovanni Gabrieli was a pioneer in the treatment of the orchestra. He not only employed it to support the voices but gave it an independent position, getting new effects by using it in contrast with them, and likewise by occasionally breaking up his choir into two or more sections. Merulo did for the organ what Gabrieli had done for the orchestra, and it now takes a more independent part when used in conjunction with voices and instruments. Monteverde found the field for his genius in opera. His aim was to make music the vehicle for the utterance of the passion which words could only inadequately express. Especially in the free use of recitative did he find opportunity for that dramatic declamation which he regarded as an essential feature of opera. This dramatic style of Monteverde's was not without its influence upon Church music. From the opera there came also into the Church the use of the solo voice for aria or recitative, and the companion forms of duet, trio, etc. Venice was at this time the great centre of musical influence, and musicians from all quarters made their pilgrimage thither. Among the number was Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672), a young German student whom the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel sent to study there. His teachers were Giovanni Gabrieli and Monteverde, and he returned to Germany fully imbued with the new ideas. It was in great measure through Schütz that Italian art came to exercise such influence upon German Church music. In the hands of Schütz and those who followed him the motet came to give place to a new form of Church music called by various names, Concerto, Sacred Symphony, Dialogue, Sacred Meditations, Motet (using the word in a different sense from what it originally bore), and at a later date Cantata. This became the accepted designation, though

originally cantata meant a composition for solo voice with instrumental accompaniment. The novel features of the cantata are the introduction of instrumental music and the use of solo voices for aria and recitative.

And what of the texts which were used for these cantatas? Originally they were composed of extracts from Scripture and verses of chorales, with the occasional introduction of songs in strophic form. The recitative was not admitted at first, its place being taken by the arioso, which may be said to lie midway between the aria and the recitative. In course of time a new style of poetical text, more suited to the new musical forms that were finding favour, was likewise imported from Italy. This was the madrigal, concerning which a German theologian, Ziegler, wrote a book to prove its eminent suitability for adaptation to music. According to him, the madrigal was an epigrammatic composition, which has a meaning deeper than appears on the surface, and of which the dominating idea is set forth in the last lines. It is a form of poetry which admits of considerable freedom. The number of lines is not fixed as in the sonnet, nor even the number of feet in each line, nor is it necessary to make all the lines rime. This freedom made it admirably suited, so Ziegler thought, for recitative.

The man to whom belongs the credit of having settled the form which the Church cantata was to assume was Erdmann Neumeister, a Lutheran pastor, who published his first cycle of *Church Devotions* in 1704. Discussing in the preface the nature of the Church cantata he roundly declares that "a cantata appears to be nothing but a fragment of an opera, composed of Stylo Recitativo and Arias." He describes the way in which he had come to compose these Church Devotions; how, when tired with his work on Sundays, he had found it at once a recreation and a devotional

exercise to gather up the main thoughts of his sermons and set them forth in verse. The publication was so successful that he followed it up with successive cycles of Church Devotions, and in 1716 a new edition appeared containing five cycles of sacred texts. The cantatas of the first cycle consist entirely of recitatives and arias. The word aria at this time had not, however, been limited to a song for solo voice, and some of these arias may have been intended for chorus. In the latter cycles he certainly makes provision for the choir, and also introduces passages from the Bible and verses from chorales. These various elements are strung together in such a way as to lend variety to the work. Sometimes a Bible passage opens the cantata and a verse of a chorale closes it; but no fixed order is observed. The central thought is suggested by the Gospel of the day or the season of the Church year, and the constituent elements serve to enforce and elucidate this thought from various sides.

The Neumeister form of cantata was received with acclamation, and henceforth became the recognised type of Church music. It did not fail to evoke a considerable amount of opposition, not only in pietistic circles but among those who resented the introduction of the theatrical style of music into the Church. Neumeister sought to forestall the objections that might be raised against it. In the preface to the first cycle, from which we have already quoted, he admits that his contention that a cantata was really a fragment of an opera might well arouse protest. "One may conjecture," he says, "that many will be offended and ask how Church music and opera can accord one with the other? Pretty much as Christ and Belial? or as light and darkness?" But in justification he points out that if we reject the cantata for this reason, then we ought in

consistency to reject all sacred song as belonging to the same genus as worldly and even lascivious songs, and to abolish all musical instruments, seeing they are employed on occasions of revelry. Is it not more reasonable to argue, he asks, that even though the poetry be based on the model of the theatre, the consecration of it to the House of God invests it with sanctity? The storm of opposition which Neumeister had foreseen did not fail to arise, and a long and bitter literary warfare was waged between the opponents and the supporters of the new style of Church music. The defenders sought to strengthen their case by an appeal to Scripture. The introduction of musical instruments was justified by a reference to the service at the consecration of the Temple; a counterpart to the frequent repetitions of the text in the arias was found in the parallelism of the Psalms; and even the *da capo* form of aria was supposed to have been anticipated in the 8th Psalm, where the last verse is a repetition of the first! These arguments may have carried little conviction. The cantata itself was its own best defender. It appealed to the popular taste. It supplied composers with the material they required for the provision of music suited to the service of the day, material which afforded scope for variety of musical treatment. There are many respects in which, with our present standards of taste, we might take exception to it. It is not our idea of what a sacred text for such a purpose should be. But this we may say for it, it was the fresh, warm outcome of a creative epoch. And when there was breathed into it the divine afflatus which inspired the soul of Bach, it became fraught with a power that makes us forget many of its shortcomings, and welcome it as a form in which some of the noblest of our Church music has found expression.

CHAPTER VI

BACH'S CANTATAS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGAN MUSIC

BACH'S cantatas extend to a musical library of considerable dimensions. They constitute the most characteristic and not the least important side of his work. "In comparison with his cantatas," says Schweitzer,[1] "everything else that Bach has done appears as hardly more than a supplement." He is known to have composed cantatas for 5 complete yearly courses of Sundays and Feast Days; and as each yearly course comprised 59 days, that gives a total of 295, of which 198 have been preserved. That he should have been able to produce cantata after cantata in this way, not, as in the case of some of his contemporaries, shallow, ephemeral compositions which bear evidence at every point of mechanical construction, but works of the highest art, instinct with the individuality and genius of the composer, is but another of those marvels before which a closer acquaintance with the life-work of this Titan leaves us lost in wonder.

We meet with different styles in the work which Bach did in this department of Church music. His earliest productions were in the form that obtained previous to the Neumeister innovation. Such, for instance, is one of the best known: "God's Time is best," the so-called

[1] *Bach*, i. 264.

Actus tragicus. The text here is composed of verses from the Bible and from chorales, with occasional interpolation of original matter. It is such a perfect work of art in respect of the libretto, the music, and the whole scheme of construction, that we feel inclined to regret that Bach ever departed from this style of cantata and conformed to the prevailing fashion. Hauptmann, a successor of Bach's, at a much later date, in the Cantorship of the St. Thomas School at Leipzig, and a musical critic of keen acumen, while praising the wonderful spirituality of the work takes exception to it from the architectonic side as "a curious monstrosity of movements heaped one upon the other and growing one into the other."[1] Our feeling is rather that the want of definite form in it, of which Hauptmann complains, is one of its chief beauties. There is no fixed scheme of construction, but the various movements grow not *into* one another, in the sense Hauptmann means, as if one jostled on the other, but *out of* one another, as if by process of organic development. It is the course of the ideas in the work that determines the succession and character of the various musical numbers, and this we feel is the true artistic method.

Unfortunately instead of keeping — as in the *Actus tragicus* — to a text composed entirely of Biblical sentences and chorale verses, Bach adopted the Neumeister type of libretto. As we have seen, Neumeister frankly admitted that he regarded the cantata as a fragment of an opera. The text was framed on the model of the opera libretto. The music likewise was constructed on operatic lines. In spite of Bach's low opinion of the operatic music of the day—he used to ask his son Friedemann if they should go over to the Dresden opera to hear the pretty little songs—he was not above learning from it. His cantatas during the middle

[1] Letter to O. Jahn, December 17, 1857.

period of his life show unmistakable evidence of the influence of Italian opera. The aria becomes an established feature — certainly a very different thing from the "pretty little songs," the insipid, florid productions of Italian opera, but still constructed on the same principle. Unfortunately he also adopted the aria generally in the *da capo* form, *i.e.* with the first half repeated after the whole has been sung right through. We feel that there is something stereotyped and artificial about this *da capo* aria. We cannot imagine such a thing in a work like "God's Time is best." Sometimes the repetition conflicts with the development of thought in the text, and after having advanced in the second half of the aria to a position beyond that at the beginning, we are taken back in the *da capo* to the starting-point. Sometimes also the *da capo* spins the number out to an inordinate length, and we ask ourselves whether Bach can have seriously intended the whole first half to be repeated. There is nothing to regret, however, in Bach's adoption of recitative in his cantatas. Any one who has felt the spell of Bach's matchless mastery of recitative must welcome the fact that the new form of cantata gave scope to this side of his genius. Among the drawbacks of the new style we must, however, reckon the fact that there is now a tendency to relegate the chorus to a sort of framework, in which the solos and recitatives are set. For the most part it appears only at the beginning and the end of the work, and does not co-operate, as in the earlier cantatas, in the development of the action. In fact we feel as if the new cantata were constructed too much upon a fixed pattern. We miss the freedom and fresh spontaneity of such a work as "God's Time is best." "There is hardly an admirer of Bach's," says Schweitzer,[1] "who has not felt

[1] *Bach*, ii. 127.

that he would give the two hundred church cantatas for one hundred works in the style of the *Actus tragicus.*"

But while we recognise these limitations, let it not be thought that there is anything artificial or mechanical in the work that Bach has cast into this mould. The general form may be the same, but each work has its own individual characteristics. It is no question of turning out so many cantatas to order, each constructed after the same pattern. Bach's texts may sometimes offer poor material enough, but he has the Midas touch that can turn even the poetaster's dross to gold. We forget the inadequacy of the form in admiration of the poetic fervour and spiritual sincerity with which he inspires it.

Bach appears to have tired of the style of text that was provided by the libretto of the day, for in his later years he turned to the chorales for material for his cantatas. At first he took the text simply as it stood, and utilised it, or part of it, for the choruses, arias, and recitatives. The melody associated with the words was not at first made the theme upon which the whole work was built up, though occasional use was made of it in the course of the cantata. This method of treating the chorale text represents a transition period in Bach's career as cantata composer. For in time he came to employ a different plan in his treatment of the chorales, a plan which he finally adopted as the method of construction of his cantatas. As we have seen, when he began to base his cantatas upon chorales, he took the text just as it stood. But evidently such a text was unsuited for employment in recitative. The symmetry and regularly recurring rime of the verses of the chorale were at conflict in principle with the broken rhythm and varying tempo of the recitative. So the plan was adopted of keeping only the first and last verses of the

chorale, in the original form, as text for the opening and closing choruses, while the text of the intervening verses was paraphased in madrigal form for employment in the arias and recitatives. And whereas in this transition form of cantata the original melody had only been sparingly used for the music, now it occupies the central place. The first chorus is built upon it, and becomes the most important number in the whole work. One method adopted in the composition of this chorus is suggested by the treatment of the chorale in the public worship of the Lutheran Church. It was the practice there for the organist to preludise before the commencement of the chorale, and to play a short interlude between the various lines of the verse. A similar scheme is sometimes employed by Bach in the opening choruses of these chorale cantatas. There is first an instrumental prelude, then the first line of the chorale is sung by one part in long sustained notes, while the others weave around it elaborate contrapuntal embroidery, perhaps suggested by some figure in the melody of the chorale. Then comes an instrumental interlude, and the second line is given out in the same way, and so on to the end of the melody. This method of treatment is similar to that of the chorale fantasia, a recognised form in the organ music of the time. There is another method of treatment which Bach adopts at other times in the first choruses of these chorale cantatas. Without any instrumental prelude one part begins at once to sing some musical phrase based upon the melody of the first line. This is taken up by voice after voice in fugal style, and worked out for a time, and then the chorale melody is brought in as a *cantus firmus* in longer notes in one of the parts, while the other parts continue their figures in the quicker motion. After the first line has been so treated the same thing is done with the melody

of the second line, and so on through the whole verse, the first chorus being built up in this fashion of fugues based on the melodies of the various lines. This method of treatment is similar to that of the chorale prelude, another recognised form in the organ music of the time. Sometimes in this species of chorus the melody of the chorale, instead of being sung by one of the chorus parts, is given to the instruments. That is the case in the great opening chorus of the cantata, "Ein feste Burg" (Luther's hymn, "A stronghold sure"), where the melody is pealed forth by the trumpets and oboes. Nay, not only so, it is repeated in canon one bar later by the basses, as if "to make assurance double sure," and is worked out in that way right to the end of the verse.

So far of the opening chorus of the chorale cantata. Then come the numbers allotted to the solo voices—arias and recitatives. Sometimes these are all based upon the melody of the chorale. Generally, however, they are free productions. Then the last number of the cantata, which has the text of the last verse of the chorale, is again based upon the chorale melody. But the treatment now is quite simple. The chorale is sung in direct form in four-part harmony, the instruments doubling the voice parts; and so the whole is brought to a close. The unpretentiousness of the final number stands in striking contrast to the elaborate figuration of the opening chorus. From the purely artistic point of view it may appear somewhat of an anticlimax. But the purely artistic consideration is out of court here. Bach writes as a Church composer. His cantatas are not for the concert room but for the Church service. They are designed to bring home to the hearts of the hearers the spiritual truths set forth in the familiar chorale. If it be the case, as some think, that the congregation were intended to join in the final chorale, then it might be

regarded as the formal Amen on their part to what has gone before. But we have no proof that that was the practice. And it may be argued that if the art which Bach expended on the harmonisation of the melody was not so much wasted labour, then the concluding chorale must have been sung by the choir. Artistically it may seem something of an anticlimax, but not liturgically. It is, as it were, the reminder to the congregation that those spiritual truths, which have been revealed to them in all their grandeur, lie embedded in the familiar verses of the chorale which is now being sounded in their ears, that the marvellous temple of beauty through which we have been wandering in delight is built up of stones hewn from the quarry of Christian truth which lies close at hand.

In what has been said we have given an account of the nature and structure of the Bach cantatas. But how shall we give any idea of the depth of spiritual power and the wealth of poetic imagination that are here revealed? To realise that we must hear them for ourselves, and there are but few opportunities of that. The popular impression of Bach is that he is a dry-as-dust musician whose compositions are little more than technical exercises. "The people here," wrote Mendelssohn from Paris, "look upon Bach as a mere full-bottomed wig, powdered with nothing but learning." The idea still obtains. There could not be a greater mistake. Bach was a great tone poet. His works are anything but the dry, stiff productions they are supposed to be. One cannot take up a single one of these Church cantatas without coming across passages that testify to the wealth of his imagination and the depth of his poetic feeling. They are full of pictorial suggestiveness. When the text describes Jesus sleeping in the boat, we can feel the gentle heaving of the vessel. When it runs, "Be-

hold I stand at the door and knock," we seem actually to hear the knocking. Bach's music is descriptive in the best sense of the word. We feel that in his compositions he must ever have conjured up some mental image, which almost unconsciously he embodied in his music. Sometimes he carries his realistic touches almost to the verge of the inartistic. But at any rate there is no doubt as to the seriousness with which he regards music as a channel fitted to give utterance to the deepest feelings. He is most happy and suggestive, sometimes, in the devices to which he resorts to bring home the truth with greater conviction to the heart. For example, in the opening chorus of the cantata, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," which is based on the words "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself," Bach has bethought him of the Saviour's comment on this summary of the law, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"; and has brought this home to the hearers by making the trumpet peal out the melody of the chorale, "These are the sacred ten commandments," while the basses answer them with the theme in augmentation. Again, to confine ourselves to one other instance of the subtle suggestiveness of Bach's treatment, take one number from "God's Time is best." This is a funeral cantata, and the idea throughout is to show the contrast between the New Testament and the Old Testament attitude towards death. In a chorus in the middle of the work, which follows after the Divine Voice is heard bidding man set his house in order and prepare for death, the lower voices give a fugal rendering of the words of Jesus Sirach[1]: "It is the old decree, Man, thou must die,"—the ever-

[1] xiv. 18.

recurring theme suggesting the inexorability of the doom that awaits us all. But above this chorus of fate is heard the soprano, the voice of faith, singing in tones of joyful acquiescence, nay rather of passionate yearning: "Yea, come, Lord Jesus." And as if to suggest what is the source of this confidence, the instruments are heard sounding the melody of the chorale: "I leave myself in God's hands, let Him do with me as He will." The faith thus inspired triumphs over the fear of death. The haunting refrain, "Man, thou must die," is brought to silence, and the sopranos are left sounding the name of the Redeemer in tones of tender entreaty, which gradually fade away in a strain of extraordinary beauty. We seem to see a Christian saint passing away with the name of Jesus on his lips, and realise what peace and confidence that name can inspire in the hour of death. These are but one or two instances to illustrate the spiritual suggestiveness of Bach's cantatas. They might be multiplied indefinitely. The more we study the cantatas, the deeper does our admiration grow of the marvellous resources of the composer's genius.

There is one other feature of these works to which we would draw attention. We have already noted how the development of the cantata was an evidence of that individualistic tendency which is one of the characteristic notes of Protestantism. This tendency meets us at every turn in Bach's cantatas. In this sense he was, indeed, as Mendelssohn's father said, "the musical representative of Protestantism." It was this more individual note in Protestantism that led to the adoption of the solo aria and recitative in the cantata. With Bach these become media whereby the personal faith of the believer finds expression. The individual is no longer merged in the great whole of the Church. He appropriates to himself the truths of Christianity, and sings of them out of the

abundance of a heart full of faith and love. This personal note is made even more prominent by a device to which Bach frequently has recourse in his cantatas, the representation of a dialogue between the believer and Christ. To take an instance from one of the better-known cantatas, there is the beautiful dialogue in "My spirit was in heaviness," in which the spirit in its darkness calls out to Christ to come and restore it, and hears the voice of the Saviour breathing assurance of peace and comfort, with its charming contrast between the "Nay" of the lurking doubt within, and the "Yea" which falls upon the ear of faith. But even in his treatment of the chorales, the song of the congregation, where there is less opportunity for this individualistic tendency, we note traces of its operation. One occasional device is to introduce a verse of a chorale with fragments of recitative interspersed between the lines, setting forth thus the attitude of the individual soul to the great truths here presented. And even in the simple harmonisations of the chorale which occur at the end of the cantatas, Bach displays a marvellous power of making the music reflect the subjective feelings which he seeks to suggest.

But we must now turn from this side of Bach's work, though we would fain dwell longer on it. As is well known, the cantatas lay for more than a century unknown and neglected, and only now are they coming to receive adequate recognition. In Bach's own day they probably attracted little notice. There is something sublime in the thought of this humble cantor going on steadily producing immortal works in the face of persistent lack of appreciation. We know that Bach was a man of deep piety. Must we not regard this as not the least important among the effects of his personal religion, that he never departed from the lofty standard that he set before

himself, but in the works which he produced for performance at the weekly service by a poor choir and an inadequate orchestra, works which there was sore temptation to regard as matters of routine to be turned out as a piece of hackwork, maintained such a consistent spirituality of tone and loftiness of ideal as stamp these occasional productions with the mark of immortality?

We turn now to speak of organ music. Of all species of instrumental music, that for the organ was the first to assume definite form. The oldest instrumental pieces known are compositions of a blind Nürnberg organist. This early development of organ music may be readily understood when we consider the established place the instrument had in the Church service, and the opportunity thereby afforded to the performer for striking out fresh lines. The first stirrings of the new life that was to produce such noble fruits are to be found in Venice in those musicians to whom we have already referred. This city had long been a centre of organ study, and the reputed inventor of the organ pedal held office in the Church of St. Mark there. It was in Venice that the first forms peculiar to instrumental music made their appearance — the Fantasia and the Ricercare, short organ pieces in fugal style. Further developments of purely instrumental form came from Claudio Merulo, the inventor of the Toccata, a form in which brilliant passage work alternates with sustained harmonic sequences, and Andrea Gabrieli, whose Canzoni, a series of canon-like imitations, may be regarded as the first step towards the development of fugue. These contributions of the Venetian School to the department of instrumental music, while rich in material wealth, were yet lacking in unity of design. In the hands of Frescobaldi, organist of St. Peter's, Rome, from 1615, the form became more compact and coherent. He holds

an honoured place in the history of organ music, and is specially to be remembered because of the innovations which he had the courage to make in the rules governing the construction of fugue. Advance in this branch of instrumental music was hampered by the limitations imposed by the old ecclesiastical Modes. Frescobaldi broke through these, and has on that account been called "the father of the modern art of fugue." After Frescobaldi the scene of the development in organ music is transferred from Italy to Germany. Among the names worthy of memory for the service they did in bringing the art to perfection we may mention Scheidt (1587–1654), Reinken (1623–1722), Buxtehude (1635–1707), and Pachelbel (1653–1706). These all made the chorale melody the foundation of their labours, and in this fact is to be found the explanation of the marvellous progress they made in the development of their art. At first, as we have seen, writing for the organ was modelled more or less upon the style of vocal composition. But it was this that was the salvation of the art. Along these polyphonic lines, *i.e.* by the treatment of the organ as a choir composed of various parts of independent interest, lay the way to the unfolding of the true genius of the instrument. It was because the later Italian organists had not realised this, but adopted a more harmonic style of treatment, that they lost the place their predecessors had held in the development of the art, and, as Sir H. Parry says,[1] "lapsed into complacent vapidity." The German organists worked along polyphonic lines in their treatment of the chorales. They evolved new artistic forms through the various methods they adopted. Sometimes they made the melody of the chorale the subject of a free fantasia; sometimes they expanded it into a rich coloratura through which the

[1] *John Sebastian Bach*, p. 9.

theme runs like a golden thread; sometimes they took a fragment of it and worked it up into a fugue. We have already seen how Bach made use of some of these forms in his chorale cantatas. The Church owes a heavy debt of gratitude to these German organists, for it was through their labours that the true ecclesiastical style of organ music was evolved. They created the forms into which Bach breathed an immortal spirit.

It was in Bach that organ music reached its highest pitch of development. One might almost say that he spoke the final word on the subject, for since his day there has risen no composer for the organ who can dispute his title to supremacy. Let us glance at some of the forms in which he composed his immortal organ works.

There are first of all the Preludes and Fugues, which remain the perpetual delight of the musician. As we are not writing for musical experts, perhaps it will be well to give a word or two of explanation as to the structure of fugue. A Fugue[1] is a polyphonic composition in which a certain musical theme, called the Subject, is brought in first in one of the parts, soprano, alto, or otherwise, and after its enunciation is taken up by one of the other parts, which repeats it at a certain interval. This repetition is technically called the Answer. Meanwhile the part which originally enunciated the theme accompanies the Answer with some interesting counterpoint. If the fugue is in more than two parts, then the Subject is given out again by a new part, followed by the Answer in another new part, and

[1] So called from Lat. *fuga*, flight, because, as will appear from the description, one part after another seems to pursue the subject throughout the work. Cp. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, xi. 561 ff.:

> "His volant touch
> Instinct through all proportions low and high
> Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue."

so on till all the parts one proposes to employ have been brought in. The entrance of the various parts constitutes what is called the Exposition. In the further working out of the fugue new interest is infused by the introduction of occasional Episodes, and by recourse to various musical devices which we cannot enter into here. The general idea throughout is to make the fugue an organic whole developed out of the thematic material set forth in the opening section. It is, as it were, a sermon upon a certain text; and we must never have the feeling, not unknown to congregations, we believe, that the preacher has forgotten the text from which he started. Another characteristic of a good fugue is that it should be good at the beginning, better in the middle, and excellent at the end. Such then is the structure of the fugue. It is one of the strictest of all musical forms, and for this reason may easily degenerate into a piece of purely mechanical writing. The wonderful thing about Bach's fugues is that he is able to infuse into this form, which seems to us so artificial and pedantic, "like perruques and pigtails in notes," to use Wagner's phrase, such a depth and variety of emotion. One forgets all about the stiffness of the form in response to the wonderful heart-reaching power of the music. Schweitzer finds in the themes of the fugues embodiments of religious ideas, and tells of an organist who declared that he could not listen to them without imagining a secret superscription to each, such as "the confidence of faith," "the gladsomeness of faith." There is an infinite variety about them. Now we have a bright and vivacious theme, now one of stately majesty, now a strain which seems to charm away all care and inspire deep spiritual peace. The Fugues are usually associated with Preludes, which frequently offer a striking contrast in mood to the

Fugues which follow. Sometimes the Prelude takes the more elaborate form of the Fantasia or Toccata. We have already met with this latter in Merulo. Some of the most brilliant and popular of Bach's organ works are composed in this form.

Among the other forms which Bach employs in his organ music we may mention the Fantasias without accompanying fugue; the Passacaglia, a great work built up upon a recurring theme generally in the bass, a marvel of architectonic genius worthy to take a place beside the violin Chaconne; the Pastorale, a charming little work which would surely convert the most adverse critic; and the Sonatas, probably composed originally for clavicembalo with two manuals and pedals, works of a never-dying charm and beauty. But most important of all, from the point of view of Church music, is the Bach organ music based on the chorales. This was a form that specially appealed to Bach with his deep religious instincts, and he had composed works of this kind all his life. Some of his earliest compositions for the organ are in this style. His last work, dictated on his deathbed, was a setting of the chorale, "When we are in deepest need," the title of which, in anticipation of his approaching end, he altered to "Before Thy throne I come." His works upon the chorales assume a variety of forms to which different titles are given: Organ Chorales, Chorale Preludes, Chorale Fantasias, Chorale Variations. Sometimes the chorale melody is played straight through with comparatively little variation here and there to heighten the effect. At other times the melody is worked up into a succession of luxuriant arabesques.

> "with many a winding bout
> Of linked sweetness long drawn out."

Now it is made the theme of a brilliant fantasia, now a

fragment of it is taken as the subject of a fugue. Sometimes it is in the upper part, sometimes in the middle, sometimes in the pedals, sometimes it does not appear directly but seems to hover like some elusive spirit over the composition. The musical setting of the chorales is no mere artificial ornamentation. It is the effort of the composer to give musical expression to the religious truth enshrined in the text. The great organist Widor tells how he was puzzled by many of the musical problems suggested by these settings of the chorales, till Schweitzer, who had come to study under him, urged him to examine them in the light of the texts associated with them, whereupon all the mysteries were solved.[1] These organ chorales are among the most marvellous productions of the art of music, of a devotional fervour and spiritual depth such as are hardly to be found elsewhere in the whole range of instrumental music. We recall the words Schumann wrote to Mendelssohn, after he had heard him playing one of the most beautiful—"Adorn thyself, O soul": "Round the *cantus firmus* hung golden garlands of leaves, and such blissfulness was breathed from within it, that you yourself avowed that if life was bereft of all hope and faith, this one chorale could renew them for you. I was silent and went away dazed into God's acre, feeling acutely pained that I could lay no flower on his urn."[2]

[1] Preface to Schweitzer's *J. S. Bach*, p. vi.
[2] *Musik und Musiker*, i. 153.

CHAPTER VII

PASSION MUSIC AND ORATORIO

The origin of the Passion Music is to be found in the practice, in vogue in the Middle Ages, of having the narrative of our Lord's Passion according to the four Evangelists chanted on four days of Holy Week. To make the rendering more vivid, it was the custom to distribute the rôles. One cleric sang the narrative portions, another the words of Christ, another those of the other characters, while the cries of the multitude and the words of any of the larger groups of people were allotted to the choir, technically called *turba*. Originally, of course, these parts were sung in Plain Song. Towards the end of the sixteenth century the change was made in the Roman Catholic Church of giving a simple polyphonic setting to the music assigned to the chorus.

This practice of having the Passion performed during Holy Week was carried over into the Protestant Church, although Luther did not think it necessary to have all the four Gospel narratives rendered. Different varieties of musical form were adopted for the setting of the Passion. The simplest was that in which the characters were assigned to solo voices, which recited in the so-called Gospel-tone, *i.e.* that employed for the Gospel lections, the Evangelist being taken by the tenor, Christ by the bass, and the other characters by the alto. The music

of the chorus was of the simplest. Generally the Passion opened with a chorus, rendering the words of the preface: "The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, as described by the holy Evangelist," and closed with a chorus of thanksgiving: "Thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ, who through His passion hath redeemed us from hell." A different variety of musical setting was that in motet form. Here there were no solo voices, everything being sung by the choir; but the various characters were represented by smaller groups of voices into which the choir was divided. Then there was a species midway between these two, in which the Evangelist's narrative and Christ's speeches were recited in Gospel-tone, while the rest was given to the chorus. Among the most important of the composers of Passion Music in the older style we might mention Schütz, whom we have already spoken of as one of the first German musicians to come under the Italian influence. So far as his work in the field of Passion Music is concerned, however, he still clings to the old forms. He employs the Gospel-tone for the Evangelist, though in the speeches of the various characters he borders on the new recitative. There is no instrumental accompaniment. Each work opens and closes with a chorus, and there are occasional choruses throughout assigned to the *turba*. There are no arias or chorales. His Passions make a profound impression, we are told by those who have heard them, by the severe beauty and solemn dignity of their style.

In the Passion Music, as in the Cantata, the impetus to further development came from the Italian Opera. It is not surprising that the theatre should have exercised its influence upon the Passion celebration, for there had been a certain dramatic element in it from the beginning. We said above that the origin of the Passion

Music was to be found in the chanting of the sacred narrative in Holy Week. That was looking at the matter from the liturgical side. But there is another side that is of even more importance, the popular practices which had arisen in connexion with the Passion celebration. The Passion had formed the theme of many of those Mysteries and Miracle Plays which were an established institution in the Middle Ages; and the Passion Music of the Church is directly descended from these dramatic representations of the sacred tragedy. For they were not abandoned at the Reformation, but were continued in some parts of Germany even during the seventeenth century. A stage was erected in the church near the altar, and here the performance took place, either during or after divine service. This religious drama had made a powerful appeal to the Teutonic genius, and the tenacity with which it maintained itself is due to the deep root it had taken in the heart of the nation. We shall have occasion, in speaking of Bach's Passion, to give one instance of the influence of these dramatic representations of the Saviour's sufferings upon Bach's work, and many others might be adduced. In fact the whole scheme of the Passion Music, as we meet it in the Lutheran Church, is the outcome of these old religious plays.

Another form of sacred drama, but this time rather a mushroom growth under Italian influence than a direct development of Teutonic tendencies, meets us in Hamburg at the close of the seventeenth century. A theatre was built to be a home for religious opera. Clergymen contributed libretti for the undertaking, and commended the opera to their flocks; the theological faculties of some of the universities gave their approval to the principle of religious opera. But the experiment was not a success, and had to be abandoned.

Under the influence of the movement to introduce the operatic style into the Church, the music of the Passion became more dramatic. Recitative took the place of recitation in the Gospel-tone. The sacred aria became an established feature, and instrumental accompaniment was introduced. Even the chorales, which it had been the custom to give the congregation to sing at various points in the Passion in order to keep up their interest, were sometimes treated as solos. A noteworthy departure from the established style of Passion text was made by Hunold of Hamburg in 1704, in his "The Bloody and Dying Jesus." He dispenses with the reciting Evangelist altogether, and gives a versified text connecting the various scenes. This was the plan also adopted by Brockes, a Hamburg town councillor, whose Passion became very popular, and was regarded as a model by his contemporaries. He substitutes a versified text for the Gospel narrative, and introduces recitatives, arias, and chorale verses. Of special interest is his introduction of the two allegorical personages, "The Daughter of Zion," borrowed from Hunold, and "The Believing Soul," as representatives of the thoughts and feelings with which the Christian consciousness contemplates the sufferings of Christ, because we meet with them in Bach's St. Matthew Passion. The verse of the libretto of Brockes's work is turgid and artificial, and the vehemence of the language borders almost on coarseness. His text was set to music by several of his contemporaries, notably by Handel.

Bach is said to have written five Passions, but of these we have now only two, the St. John and the St. Matthew. The St. Luke Passion which exists in Bach's handwriting we cannot believe to have been Bach's own composition. We shall confine ourselves in what we say to the St. Matthew Passion, which is admitted by

common consent to be the highest development of this form of music, and one of the supreme masterpieces of human genius.

The text is the work of Friedrich Henrici, who adopted the pseudonym of Picander, a writer with whom Bach had collaborated for many years. The Bible text is left unchanged. Bach would have nothing to do with any such paraphrase of Scripture as we meet with in the Brockes Passion. At various points in the narrative pauses are made for pious reflection, and to give expression to the feelings with which the incidents described fill the heart of the believer. These feelings find expression in arias, which are usually preceded by recitatives in arioso form, and likewise in choruses which are interspersed through the work. There is reason to believe that Bach had a hand in the arrangement of the text. Probably the selection of the chorale verses was his. It is a very happy idea thus to interweave in the sacred narrative verses of the well-known chorales, in which the devotion of the Church finds utterance; and no more appropriate selection of suitable texts could be conceived than that here made. The Biblical text comprises the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh chapters of St. Matthew. Bach has divided the work into two Parts, the first concluding with the capture of Jesus and the flight of the disciples.[1] These two Parts are broken up into several scenes by the introduction of the arias and chorales with their pious comments, which round off the various incidents of the sacred drama.

The musical scheme of the work is on a grand scale. There are two choirs, each with its own orchestra. In the larger choruses they act in concert, now responding one to the other, now combining to pile up the dramatic effect. Some of the chorus work for smaller groups of

[1] xxvi. 56.

characters is given to one chorus alone. In the chorales the two choirs unite their forces and sing in four parts. The Evangelist is taken by the tenor voice, Jesus by the bass. The Evangelist and speaking characters, with the exception of Jesus, employ what is called *secco* recitative, *i.e.* recitative accompanied only by occasional chords struck upon the harpsichord or organ. There is no striving after dramatic effect in the style of the recitative, but Bach has infused into it a beauty and a depth of pathos that elevate this type of recitative, which may so easily degenerate into the conventional and uninteresting, into a most perfect work of art. There are some who find the recitative quite the most noteworthy feature of the whole work. That assigned to Jesus is supported by a string quartet, generally playing sustained chords. At the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper the recitative is expanded into an arioso, round which the string quartet weaves a texture of beautiful melody. The string accompaniment to the Jesus recitatives makes the figure of the Saviour stand out from the rest, and seems, as has been well said, to surround His head with a halo of glory. At one point the halo seems to fade away, when our Lord in His agony on the cross gives utterance to that pathetic cry, "Eli, Eli, lama asabthani?" Then, and then only, the accompanying strings are silent, and we realise the depth of anguish which wrung the Saviour's heart in that awful hour.

Among the most interesting numbers in the work are the arioso settings of the madrigals which generally precede the arias. These have usually an accompaniment with some strongly marked figure recurring throughout, and in contrast with the Jesus recitatives the winds are prominent in the accompaniment. The incidental choruses in which the utterances of the multitude find expression are short and dramatic in character. The

response of the multitude to the question of Pilate: "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" is restricted to the one word "Barabbas," without any repetition; but the effect is overwhelming as of a sudden explosion of pent-up fury. Again the chorus, "Let Him be crucified," extends but to eight bars; yet in that brief compass Bach has concentrated a fierceness of hate that makes us well-nigh shudder. When, after Pilate's remonstrance, the people cry out *the more*, Bach has suggested the increased vehemence of their rage by raising the pitch a semitone. The madrigal choruses receive broader treatment. The opening one deserves special notice. It had been the custom to begin the Passion Music with a chorale, or with an invitation in verse to come and behold the sufferings of Christ. But Bach's Passion opens with a chorus which describes the Saviour's passage to Calvary bearing His cross amid the weeping of the daughters of Jerusalem. Our first impression is that it is not a very suitable opening to the work. There is a swing, almost a sense of bustle about the music that seems hardly suited to the solemnity of the occasion. Contrast with it the opening symphony of the Second Part, for instance. The very first bar there sounds a note of profound sadness. We realise at once the gloom of the atmosphere, but in the opening chorus of the First Part it is only by an effort of imagination that we appreciate the unspeakable sadness of the occasion. And further the text of the opening chorus appears of questionable appropriateness. Why is the mere passage to the cross rather than the crucifixion selected as the theme upon which attention is concentrated? And why does the chorus describing the procession to the cross come in at the very beginning of the work, to be followed by a whole train of incidents which lead up to it? Spitta, Bach's eminent biographer,

has suggested that the solution of these difficulties is to be found in the fact that Bach is here basing upon an old popular custom. It was the practice in the Passion plays in some parts of Germany to make the performance in church only the preface to a further performance, which consisted of a solemn procession to some eminence in the neighbourhood called the Cross-hill. This procession was modelled upon that described in the Gospels, and at various points on the way a halt was made and the various incidents in the Passion story enacted. These processions were retained in some parts of Germany till well on towards the close of the eighteenth century. It is such a practice that Bach has in his mind in the opening chorus. This accounts for the fact that the progress to the cross should have been selected as the theme for the opening chorus, and also explains the somewhat animated character of the music. Bach has also done homage to the custom of having a chorale to begin the Passion. For while the first choir, which represents the Daughters of Zion, laments the fate of the Bridegroom, who goes as a lamb to the slaughter, and the second choir, which represents the Believers, intervenes with monosyllabic questions as to the victim and his fate, a third choir of sopranos, probably placed in a different part of the church, strikes in with the chorale: "O Lamb of God"; the text sung by the first choir being so arranged that it coincides in thought with the words of the chorale. Among the larger chorus numbers worthy of remark are the passionate outburst of indignation at the capture of Jesus, in which the two choirs summon the elements of Nature to destroy the betrayer, the beautiful chorale fantasia with which the First Part closes, and the final chorus which breathes a tender farewell over the grave of the Saviour.

There are twelve chorales in the work, exclusive of those used in the first and last choruses of the First Part. Some of the chorale melodies are repeated more than once, in especial the well-known one of the chorale: "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden." This was one of Bach's favourite chorales, and the melody is introduced five times in the Passion. Most impressive of all is the setting immediately after Jesus gives up the ghost on the cross. The words breathe the prayer that the Saviour may be with us when our hour of departure comes, and the music has a tender pathos that melts our whole being. Bach is always impressive when he deals with death; but surely among the many beautiful passages in his works in which he treats the subject, none is more powerful or more pathetic than this simple chorale in which, amid our grief before the cross on Calvary, we hear a voice whispering of the comfort and hope which that sacrifice can inspire in the dark hour that awaits us all!

The solo arias which are introduced at various points throughout the work are among the most moving that Bach has written. With the exception of the one given to Judas, they give expression to the feelings which fill the heart of the believer in contemplation of the Saviour's Passion. Here is bitter grief for the sin which claimed Him as its victim, heartfelt penitence with its tearful entreaty for forgiveness, pious resignation to the Divine Will inspired by the example of Christ, willing surrender to the love which redeemed us at such a price. What we have said above about the personal note that is characteristic of Protestantism holds good in a supreme degree here. The whole work is conceived as if in answer to the challenge: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Nothing to us? Nay, it is

everything. It is through our sin,—sin like to that of which our hearts accuse us,—that this awful tragedy was enacted. It is for our salvation that Christ died. It is through His stripes that we are healed. It is the reflection of the drama that is enacted time and again within the human heart that is here set before us. That is the standpoint from which the whole work is composed. "What is all this to me?" is the question that is thrust home upon us again and again. And the answer is given in the flood of feelings awakened, in the grief, the penitence, the heartfelt devotion, the warm faith which the contemplation of the Saviour's Passion calls forth, feelings which find such sincere expression in the arias in which the human soul seems to pour forth its deepest and most sacred emotions.

We turn now to consider Oratorio, a kindred musical form to the Passion Music. Oratorio may be described as a musical production in which we have a sacred text, of more or less dramatic character, set to music for solo and chorus, with instrumental accompaniment but without the external accessories of the theatre. Strictly speaking, oratorio cannot be held to be Church music, for it is not performed in church nor associated with Church worship, and its standpoint is essentially different from that of Church music. In Church music the standpoint of the auditor is that of one who identifies himself with the thoughts and feelings expressed. In oratorio he stands over against the objective representation of certain Scriptural or sacred incidents. But oratorio had its origin in the Church, it deals with the same themes as meet us in church, and touches the life of the Church at so many points that we may advisedly consider it here. Much that has been said in tracing the development of Passion Music applies likewise to oratorio. It too is the outcome of that effort to give dramatic

representation to the great truths of religion which found expression in the Mysteries and Morality Plays. From these have come Passion Music and oratorio in sacred music, and opera in secular. Passion Music shows more traces of the Teutonic spirit in its development, oratorio and opera of Italian influence. The name oratorio is interesting because of the light it sheds on the circumstances in which the first efforts in this direction were made. It was that genial ecclesiastic, Filippo Neri, "the humorous saint" as Goethe called him, who first conceived the idea of having musical representations of Scripture incidents to maintain the interest of his congregation. That was in 1540. The musical element introduced consisted of the so-called *Laudi spirituali* composed by Animuccia and by Palestrina, who was befriended by Neri. These *Laudi spirituali* were compositions of a lyrical character, designed to bring home more forcibly the sacred incidents, with a certain dramatic tendency in them too, inasmuch as one or more solo voices alternated with the choir. In these humble efforts we trace the beginnings of oratorio. As they were given in the oratory or chapel of the convent, the name oratorio came to be given to representations of this sort. But while these representations were called oratorios, they bore but little resemblance to oratorio in the form in which we are familiar with it, being really plays with incidental music. The first example of oratorio in a sense more nearly corresponding to that which we usually associate with the word is not met with till 1600, five years after the death of Neri, the year in which also the first opera was produced at Florence. The oratorio in question was the musical drama by Emilio del Cavaliere, entitled "The Representation of the Soul and the Body." It was produced at the oratory of S. Maria in Vallicella, the place where Neri

had held his musical performances. It was really nothing more or less than an opera on a sacred subject. It was performed on a stage with scenery, costumes, action, and dancing. The characters were allegorical personages: Time, the World, Human Life, etc. At the opening, these last two appear in rich clothing, but as the drama proceeds it grows poorer and poorer, till at last they are reduced to skeletons, to indicate the transitoriness of earthly joys. The music was wholly declamatory, no distinction being made between recitative and aria. The orchestra was concealed from view, but the performers on the stage carried musical instruments, and made a pretence of playing them. The chorus sat on the stage round the principal characters, rising up when they took part in the action. During the instrumental symphonies dances were performed.

From this account it will be evident that in its beginnings oratorio was practically identical with opera, save that the subject-matter was of a more or less sacred character. For more than a century it still adopted the external accessories of the theatre. The next oratorios, for instance, with which we meet were presented with such magnificence of stage decoration and costume that they were really more of the nature of spectacular ballets with music than of oratorio.

A great advance is made in the work of Carissimi (1604–1674), whose oratorios are on an entirely different musical plane from those theatrical productions. His music shows great dramatic power. In his hands the recitative becomes smoother and more plastic, more capable of expressing the emotions. He makes comparatively little use of the orchestra, but shows mastery in his use of the voices, both in solo and in chorus. Particularly noteworthy is his treatment of the choruses, where he displays not only much polyphonic skill but a

great power of expression. Among his oratorios we may mention "Jephte," "Judicium Solomonis," "Baltazar" and "Jonas." It was about this time that the spectacular element in oratorio began to be abandoned. A new feature in the dramatic side was the introduction of a person called "Historicus," who recited narrative passages between the dialogues, after the fashion of the Evangelist in the Passion Music. Carissimi adopted this practice, and it soon became general.

Before we leave Italy there is another name worthy of special mention for his work in oratorio, Alessandro Scarlatti (1659–1725), who was a disciple of Carissimi. To him belongs the credit of the introduction of the *da capo* air, which attained such vogue in opera and oratorio. He also inaugurated the practice, which became the established one in oratorio, of having accompanied recitative for the more dramatic parts of the text, and reserving the *recitativo secco* for the narrative portions.

The mention of Scarlatti brings us to Handel, who was a friend of his son. Handel went to Italy to study, and in his music shows many traces of the influence of the Italian School. He turned to oratorio after opera. Had his work in the latter department met with success, it is very probable that we should never have had those immortal oratorios upon which his fame chiefly rests. It was late in life when he settled on oratorio as the sphere in which he was henceforth to seek his laurels. True, it was not an altogether novel one for him. In his early days he had composed two Passions, one, as we have seen, to the popular text of Brockes. And during his stay in Italy he had produced two oratorios, "The Resurrection" and the "Triumph of Time." But it was not till after he had been long settled in England that he devoted himself exclusively to the sphere

of sacred music. It was with unwillingness that he withdrew from the field of opera. But the fates were against him. Failure had dogged his steps in his various operatic enterprises, and at last he had to abandon them. He betook himself to sacred music, remarking that "that was best suited to a man descending in the vale of years." His first English oratorio, "Esther," had indeed been composed some years before. It was written when Handel was in the service of the Duke of Chandos, but was not produced in public till he had become involved in theatrical enterprise. It was originally given on the stage, with scenery but without dramatic action. The Bishop of London intervened and forbade the use of scenery; and henceforth Handel's oratorios, though performed in the theatre, employed none of the external accessories of the stage. We cannot but be thankful to this Bishop for the prohibition which ultimately divorced oratorio from the theatre, and assigned to it a field peculiar to itself. The practice of having scenery and costumes and other stage adjuncts was a compromise which was better abandoned. In order to realise this, we may pause for a few moments to discuss the nature of this form of art which, starting from the stage and itself dramatic in character, yet found its true *métier* only when it rejected those very things which we should have thought would tend to heighten the dramatic effect.

"There can be no doubt," says Liszt, "that in many cases art sacrifices nothing by renouncing the attempt to represent everything, to make everything plain to the senses. . . . In many cases there is rather a gain when one suggests rather than describes, describes rather than presents in concrete reality. Indeed in many cases the imagination so outstrips the possibility of representation that the latter would find it vain

to attempt to compete with it."[1] The principle *divide et impera* seems to obtain in art. Sculpture renounces the attempt to present the human form in the manifoldness of the natural colour, or with the light of the spirit flashing from the eye. Painting discards one of the dimensions of space, and instead of creating actual objects in space, presents only the suggestion of these on a flat surface. But these arts gain by the limitations they impose on themselves. By thus restricting the sphere within which they are to work they can better concentrate their efforts on the task they undertake. And further, they benefit through the appeal they make to the imagination. For art is not the creation of actual objects, but the challenge to the imagination to co-operate in the construction of a higher world and to people it with forms. And the nobler the art, the severer the demands it makes upon the imagination. These illustrations from sister arts may serve to explain and justify the procedure adopted in oratorio. The plot of the libretto may be more or less dramatic in character. But no attempt is made to give a dramatic representation of the action. There is no scenery, no action, no gesture. One's first feeling is that the absence of these things must be counted so much loss, and that the representation would gain in effectiveness the more realistic the conditions of performance. But is that really so? Is it not the case that even on the stage itself, the attempt to heighten the effect by minute attention to external accessories sometimes defeats the very end in view? Hence the adoption by some of our leading present-day actors of the simplest *mise en scène* in the production of some of Shakespeare's tragedies. Who would desire to see the *Oedipus Rex* staged with all the circumstance of a

[1] *Gesammelte Schriften*, v. 212.

modern play? Such great dramas move on a higher plane, where we desire, as far as possible, to forget all the machinery and tinsel of the theatre. Something of the same kind holds good with regard to the religious drama which it is the purpose of oratorio to represent. It is a true instinct—true from the artistic no less than from the religious point of view—that has resented the attempt to give any theatrical representation of Scriptural subjects. That were to drag down the sublime to the commonplace, to degrade the deeply spiritual and poetic to the prose of everyday life. No doubt it may be felt that the practice of oratorio is even more indefensible, that if it be incongruous to have Scriptural themes represented on the stage with actors and costumes and scenery all designed to heighten the illusion, much more so is it to have a performance in a concert hall with chorus and soloists in evening dress. But the very fact that no attempt is made to give any realistic presentation at all blunts the force of this objection. The conditions under which the performance is given are the conventions of social life, and are readily left out of account. Suppose we are present at a dramatic representation of "Samson" and hear the hero sing "Total eclipse," then all the accompaniments of scenery and costume and gesture go to make up the impression produced on our minds. They are meant to contribute to the effect. But when we see a gentleman in evening dress on a platform rise to sing that solo, we forget, and are meant to forget, the scene before us. If the music achieves its end, then the presence and personality of the singer should fade away, and in imagination we should behold the miserable captive bewailing his loss of sight. Evidently an art of this kind makes serious demands upon both composer and hearers. The composer gets no assistance from

stage properties or effects. He has to make the music alone do that which such external assistance might contribute to. He has to place the conditions which he desires to represent before the mind's eye of his audience. We said that to have dramatic representation of Scriptural subjects would be to bring them down to the prose of everyday life. In oratorio we have the very opposite tendency. The composer seeks to lift up his audience from the prose of everyday life to the lofty heights on which the action of the poem moves, with no instrument save his music alone. There is a story to the effect that after the first performance of the "Messiah" in London a nobleman complimented Handel on the entertainment he had given the town, and received the reply: "My lord, I should be sorry if I only entertained them. I wish to make them better." The story expresses a deep truth. The purpose of oratorio, as has been well said by a German critic,[1] is "neither to minister to our senses, nor to afford us what we ordinarily understand by the words pleasure and entertainment, but to elevate our souls, to purify our lives, and, so far as art can conduce to such an end, to strengthen our faith and our devotion towards God." That is an achievement which calls for the highest genius on the part of the composer. And here, as in all the higher forms of art, the demands upon the percipient also are severe. He must co-operate with the composer. According to his imagination and spiritual insight is it unto him. He may see nothing but the concert platform with its mass of singers, or he may be transported in imagination to some Biblical scene and live through the drama that is being enacted. The slender equipment in respect of external accessories which oratorio provides is a challenge at once to the genius of the composer and

[1] Bitter, *Gesch. des Oratoriums*, p. 46.

the imagination of the audience, and for this very reason elevates this form of art to the highest plane.

This digression may serve to make clearer the nature and purpose of oratorio. We return now to the work of Handel. He composed altogether seventeen English oratorios, most of them, as we have said, during the later years of his life, for there is a gap of thirteen years between the composition of "Esther," his first English oratorio, and the production of "Deborah" which followed next. By this time his style was matured, and the works which follow represent the ripest fruits of the life-work of one of the greatest musical geniuses the world has seen. They may be divided into two groups: those in which the dramatic element prevails, and those which are treated more in the epic spirit. It is characteristic of oratorio that it combines features of all three species of poetry—epic, lyric, and dramatic. While all Handel's oratorios contain the lyrical element, the general scheme of treatment is in some dramatic, in others epic. Among the former class we may mention "Saul," "Samson," "Judas Maccabæus," among the latter "Israel in Egypt" and the "Messiah." In both species of treatment Handel displays masterly power. One wonders which to admire most, the beautiful lyrics which steal their way to the heart by a charm which custom can never stale, the power of dramatic expression which can conjure up before the mind souls tossed and torn by the storms of passion, or that stately style of epic representation which marshals before the eye some of the grandest events in human history with all the dignity befitting such noble themes. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of all in Handel's oratorio style is the treatment of the chorus. The characteristic that impresses us in Handel's choruses is their splendid grandeur. The mood they have to express may vary, now it may be an outburst of joy, now

a wail of grief, now a song of triumph; the treatment is always stately and dignified. We are made to feel that the subject has been lifted up to the realm of the sublime. And withal the means he employs are ever of the simplest. "Go," said Beethoven, speaking of Handel, "and learn with scanty means to produce such great results."

Of all the oratorios the "Messiah" is the popular favourite. It has earned a lasting place in the affection of the people. And well is it worthy the position it holds. Would that the popular taste were always as sound as it proves in the glorification of the "Messiah"! Nothing could be happier than the arrangement of the text. From the first bar to the last the music is a masterpiece of genius. What solemn thoughts are inspired by the opening strains of the overture! And with what sweetness does the opening symphony of the tenor recitative which follows fall upon the ear, already speaking of the comfort that awaits the people! What a variety of emotions is reflected in the solos—the exuberant joy of "Rejoice greatly"; the devout trustfulness of "I know that my Redeemer liveth"; the blind groping of "The people that walked in darkness"; the peace and comfort of heart of "He shall feed His flock"; the tender grief of "He was despised"; and the unspeakable anguish of heart of the Passion solos! And what a power and solid grandeur there is in the choruses! Who can hear unmoved the solemn strains of "Behold the Lamb of God," or fail to echo in his heart the triumph of the Hallelujah Chorus? Or what listener, however ignorant of the technique of the musician's art, can fail to be impressed by the ever-swelling grandeur of the final Amen Chorus? We may be sure that to the end of time this wonderful work will be cherished as one of the priceless treasures of the human race.

In Passion music and oratorio, Bach and Handel stand supreme. The former practically ceased with Bach. Oratorio in the form which Handel impressed upon it has endured to the present day. But none has risen to dispute Handel's pre-eminence, nor has the form of oratorio undergone any essential development.

CHAPTER VIII

ENGLISH CHURCH MUSIC

Our knowledge of the musical conditions in the English Church previous to the Reformation is not so full as we might desire. The wanton destruction of records at the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. has deprived us of much of the material that might have helped us to form a better conception of the musical side of the liturgy in the pre-Reformation Church. The main feature of the service was doubtless the rendering of the various chants of the Mass. These would be given in Plain Song in the manner described above. In addition to these there would also be music of a more artistic character, for we have motets and anthems of pre-Reformation date which must have found a place in the service.

Among the musicians of note in England at the time of the Reformation we may mention Sheppard, Taverner, and Merbecke. Some of the incidents in their lives give us interesting glimpses of the conditions of the time. For instance, Sheppard, who was instructor of the choristers at Magdalen College, Oxford, was admonished by the authorities for having entrapped and carried off a chorister without the king's licence. This impressing of choristers was a practice resorted to for filling the choirs at St. Paul's, St. George's (Windsor), and the Chapel

Royal. Officers were empowered by royal warrant to impress children "with good brestes" for the staffing of these choirs. But Sheppard had acted without any such warrant, and so came into conflict with the authorities. Taverner was suspected of heretical leanings, and was imprisoned along with some others in a deep cave under the college at Cambridge. One of his companions was sent to the stake, but Cardinal Wolsey did not press the charge against Taverner, seeing he was only a musician. Merbecke also, who was organist at St. George's, Windsor, was arrested on the same charge, and was condemned to the stake; but owing to his eminence in music he was pardoned, and lived to perform notable musical service to the Church, as we shall relate presently.

The Reformation brought with it the substitution of English for Latin in the liturgy of the Church. It is said that Henry VIII. had a hand in the translation. Cranmer arranged the version of the Litany for chanting. His conception of the manner in which it should be rendered is shown in his letter to the king: "After your Highness has corrected it, if your Grace commands some devout and solemn note to be made thereunto, as is to the procession which your Majesty has already set forth in English, I trust it will much excitate and stir the hearts of all men to devotion and godliness. But in my opinion, the song that shall be made thereunto would not be full of notes, but, as near as may be, for every syllable a note, so that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly." These remarks of Cranmer's indicate the nature of the simplification in the rendering of the Plain Song chant which he desired to bring about. He wished to dispense with the various ornaments and prolongations of the melody that had crept in, and to return to the simple method of a note for each syllable. The music selected for the Litany was a Plain Song chant of great

antiquity. The Litany in English was first sung in St. Paul's Cathedral in 1547.

The adaptation to music of the rest of the Prayer Book was undertaken by Merbecke in his *The Boke of Common Praier noted*, published in 1550. The liturgy used was the first of Edward VI., and here again the music was that of the old Plain Song. It was sung in unison, a note to each syllable. Not very long after the publication of Merbecke's work appeared a new musical setting of a considerable portion of the Church Service by Tallis, one of the most distinguished composers of the time. Here the unison chant gives place to a harmonic arrangement. The melody is given to the tenor and the other parts supply a rich harmony. Tallis's Versicles and Responses and Litany are in general use in the Anglican Church to this day, but as the congregation, when they sing, usually take the upper part, the melody of the old chant is quite lost sight of. On lines similar to Tallis's work is John Day's publication of date 1560, entitled: "Certaine notes set forthe in foure and three parts to be song at the Mornyng, Communion and Evenyng Praier, very necessarie for the Churche of Christe to be frequented and used: and unto them be added divers Godly Praiers and Psalmes in the like forme to the honour and prayse of God." Tallis, Sheppard, and Taverner were among the composers who contributed to this work.

In those Reformation times the Church of England was fortunate in having on the throne sovereigns who were much interested in music and anxious to encourage and improve the musical services of the Church. Henry VIII. was himself a composer, and his statutes with regard to the Cathedral Service show a desire to have the regulation of the music entrusted to men of learning, good character, and musical skill. Edward VI. and

Mary had both some musical training. During the reign of the latter the chief change in the performance of the Choral Service appears to have been that Latin was substituted for English. Queen Elizabeth, like her father, sought to foster the Cathedral Service. She issued warrants for the impressing of recruits to the Royal Chapel at Windsor. She gave official sanction to the practice that had already become established of having some music in addition to the Plain Song chant. "She also willeth and commandeth," so runs her Injunction, "that there may be a modest and distinct song so used in all parts of the common prayer, that the same might be understood as if it were read without singing, and yet, nevertheless, for the comforting of such as delight in musick, it may be permitted that in the beginning or end of common prayer, either morning or evening, there may be sung an hymn, or such like song, to the praise of Almighty God, in the best melody and musick that may conveniently be devised, having respect that the sentence (*i.e.* the sense) of the hymn may be perceived or understood."

This injunction justified the introduction of something more elaborate than the Plain Song chants. The musicians of the Church found scope for their energies in the Anthem and in the musical setting of the Full Service, of both of which forms it will be in place here to speak.

The word Anthem is another form of Antiphon, which we have already met with. The Antiphon was a short piece of Plain Song associated with some Psalm or Canticle. In the Anthem this brief responsory has attained independent status, and the term has come to denote "a text or passage from Scripture, or from the Liturgy, or a metrical Hymn, set to ornate music, not after the manner of a Chant, but to varied

melodies."[1] Anthems have usually instrumental accompaniment, by organ or orchestra, and are classified as Full and Verse. In the Full Anthem all the music is given to the chorus; in the Verse, solos, duets, etc., are introduced in addition to the chorus, and the tendency is to relegate the latter to a subordinate place. The Anthem is a form of vocal music that admits of the widest variety in plan and treatment, and the compositions under this title range from simple sentences, suited to the capacity of a village choir, to elaborate works of art, calling for all the musical resources of a cathedral.

The Full Service is based upon the form of the Mass. When complete, it includes the Venite, Te Deum, Benedicite, Benedictus, Jubilate, Kyrie eleison, Nicene Creed, Sanctus, Gloria in excelsis, Magnificat, Cantate Domino, Nunc dimittis, and Deus misereatur. Several of these numbers, however, gradually fell into the background and did not receive musical treatment. The parts of the service specially selected for free musical treatment were the Te Deum, Benedictus or Jubilate, Magnificat and Nunc dimittis.

The arrangements made under Elizabeth for provision of a full and ornate choral service aroused considerable opposition from the Puritan side. Objection was taken to the antiphonal rendering of the Psalms, which was compared to a "tossing them to and fro like tennis balls." The Puritans demanded "that all cathedral churches be put down, where the service of God is grievously abused by piping upon organs, singing, ringing and trowling of Psalms from side to side, with the squeaking of chanting choristers disguised (like all the rest) in white surplices; some in corner caps and

[1] Jebb, *The Choral Service of the United Church of England and Ireland*, p. 369.

silly copes, imitating the fashion and manner of Antichrist, the Pope, that man of sin, with all his other rabble of miscreants and shavelings." But the Queen was not to be moved from her purpose, and during her reign the Cathedral Service became so firmly established that it survived the musical interregnum of the Commonwealth, and has lasted practically unchanged to the present day.

Before we leave the period with which we have been dealing, it may be interesting to note a few particulars about the work of some of the more outstanding of the Church composers. Dr. Christopher Tye is entitled to an honoured place among them. It is claimed for him that he restored Church music after it had been almost ruined by the dissolution of the monasteries. His sacred music was composed mostly to Latin words, as was the case with many composers of this time. He produced a metrical version of the first fourteen chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, poor stuff enough so far as the verse was concerned, but the music he composed to it, which is in the form of metrical anthems, is excellent. Some of the numbers have been adapted to other and more worthy words, and may still be heard occasionally. Tye's musical style was solid and dignified.

Thomas Tallis is one of the names of which his country may well be proud. We have already seen that he harmonised the Plain Song chant of the Responses and Litany. It is a moot point whether his harmonies were in four or five parts. The latter is the arrangement now generally performed. Among Tallis's other compositions we may mention a Mass, Cantiones Sacrae, a collection of motets in five and six parts (in collaboration with Byrd), a Church Service in the Dorian mode, and various anthems. Of special note is his motet, "*Spem in alium non habui*," for forty voices, dispersed in eight

five-part choirs, a monument of musical ingenuity. Of Tallis Dr. Burney writes: "If foreigners should ever deign to look into my book, it is my wish, for the honour of our nation, they should see that long before the works and reputation of Palestrina had circulated throughout Europe, we had Choral Music of our own, which for gravity of style, purity of harmony, ingenuity of design, and clear and masterly contexture, was equal to the best productions of that truly venerable master." [1] William Byrd was a pupil of Tallis. He was highly esteemed by his contemporaries, and his works show great contrapuntal skill combined with dignity of style. He remained true to the Roman Catholic faith, and had to endure some suffering for conscience' sake. He composed three Masses and a Church Service, and likewise motets and anthems. Richard Farrant was a contemporary of Tallis. Few of his compositions have come down to us, but those we have possess a charm and sweetness that we miss in Tallis. Not to dwell on some of the minor composers, we pass now to one who towers above the rest—Orlando Gibbons (1573–1625). His contributions to Church music comprise Preces, Services, and Anthems. Some of his anthems are described as "with viols." These instruments were now beginning to be used to accompany sacred music. They had no independent part but simply doubled the voice parts. Some think they played only in the Verse portions of the anthem, the organ being used for the Full passages. Gibbons's Service in F is a work of much power and beauty. Still preserving the classic dignity of Tallis's style of composition, Gibbons infuses into his music a grace and power of expression that are lacking in his predecessor. His genius seems to have led him up to a Pisgah height, from which he caught a

[1] *History of Music*, iii. 76.

glimpse of the land of promise of which music was to take possession when it realised to the full its power, of which we see some stirring in Gibbons, to give expression to the emotions. The high place Gibbons holds in music is witnessed to by the title which has been accorded to him—"The English Palestrina."

During the Commonwealth Church music fell upon evil days. It is true that the attitude of the Puritans towards music was not so severe as has sometimes been represented. "Ten years of gloomy silence," says Burney[1] "seem to have elapsed before a string was suffered to vibrate, or a pipe to breathe aloud, in the kingdom." But that is an exaggeration. There is evidence to prove that the nation was not condemned to such musical starvation. Music was by no means discountenanced. Cromwell was fond of the art, and had the best musicians in his service. A Council of Music was appointed by the Government to deliberate on musical matters. Masques were performed, and instrumental music made considerable progress. But so far as Church music was concerned, the "gloomy silence" which Burney alleges is a fairly accurate description. We have seen the feelings of the Puritans regarding the elaborate choral service of the Church. Now came the opportunity of putting their opinions into practice, and silencing the "curious singing"—to use the phrase by which such artistic choral work was designated in olden times—and instrumental music which caused such offence. The work of suppressing the Cathedral Service was systematically undertaken. The organs were broken up, the pipes dragged out from the lofts and sold, the music-books torn and burned, the organists driven forth to seek some other calling. So complete was the work of destruction, that when the Restoration came there

[1] *History of Music*, iii. 423.

was scarcely an organ or an organ-builder to be found in the kingdom.

The work of restoring the Cathedral Service to its former status was attended with much difficulty. The manner of performing the service had to some extent been forgotten, and when it was revived the various cathedrals adopted such different uses that it was found necessary to have some standard to appeal to. This was provided by Edward Lowe, who at the request of the University of Oxford, published "A Short Direction for the performance of Cathedral Services. Published for the information of such Persons as are Ignorant of it and shall be call'd to officiate in Cathedral or Collegiate Churches where it hath formerly been in use." There was difficulty in procuring choristers. Boys who could sing were hardly to be found, and it was the custom to fill in the upper voices with the cornet, which at this time was a rude kind of oboe, or to write for male voices alone. Charles II. appointed Captain Cooke, a former chorister who had borne a captain's commission in the war, Master of the Children in the Chapel Royal. With him were associated in the superintendence of the music some of the former musicians of the Chapel Royal, such as Dr. Child and Dr. Christopher Gibbons, son of Orlando. But these old musicians found great difficulty in suiting the king's taste in music. They clung to the old severe style, while Charles, who had been accustomed to the lighter type of French music, had no taste for the grave, stately style which Tallis had inaugurated. He insisted that the composers attached to his chapel should introduce orchestral symphonies and ritornelles in their anthems. Here is Evelyn's description of the new style of music: "One of His Ma^{tys} Chaplains preach'd, after which, instead of y^{e} antient, grave and solemn wind musiq accompanying y^{e} organ, was introduc'd a concert

of 24 violins between every pause, after y^e^ French fantastical light way, better suiting a tavern, or a play-house, than a church. This was y^e^ first time of change, and now we no more hear y^e^ cornet w^ch^ gave life to y^e^ organ; that instrument quite left off, in which the English were so skilfull."[1] Captain Cooke seems to have had a remarkable gift of recognising promise of musical power, for he gathered round him in the Chapel Royal a galaxy of youthful talent that was destined to shed most brilliant lustre on the Restoration School of music. Pelham Humfrey, Michael Wise, John Blow, Thomas Tudway, Henry Purcell—that was indeed a wonderful array of musical ability. Humfrey was sent by Charles to France to study under Lully, and on his return he introduced many of the novel effects he had there learned. His music is rich in expression and full of power. He introduced declamatory recitative into English Church music, and many of his works show considerable dramatic force. Blow became a prolific composer, being the author of fourteen Services and over a hundred anthems. He was organist of Westminster Abbey, but resigned in favour of his pupil Henry Purcell, for whom he had such high esteem that he requested to have inscribed on his tombstone that he was "Master to the famous Mr. Henry Purcell." Blow's music is fresh and melodious, with a massive grandeur about the chorus work. But the most brilliant star of all among the Restoration composers is Henry Purcell. He was, as we have seen, organist at Westminster Abbey, and held that post till his death at the age of thirty-seven. In his brief life he succeeded in establishing a fame for himself which ranks him among the immortals. He attempted almost every form of composition, Church music, opera, chamber music. His Church music comprises Services and

[1] December 21, 1662.

Anthems, some with orchestral accompaniment composed for the Chapel Royal, some with organ accompaniment for Westminster Abbey. His work displays a depth of musical skill and a boldness and fertility of invention that command our admiration. In his Verse Anthems the choruses are comparatively short but marvellously effective. One of his most celebrated sacred compositions is the Te Deum and Jubilate in D, scored for four voices, strings, trumpets, and organ, a work which it was the custom for some years to sing annually at St. Paul's at the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy. Among the singers in the Chapel Royal Purcell had a bass with a voice of remarkable range. He composed much for him, and the bass solo is a feature of Purcell's works. It was for him that Purcell wrote the solo in the anthem "They that go down to the Sea in Ships," in which the bass voice is made to descend two octaves, a piece of realism which is open to criticism, but which is said to be exceedingly effective in execution. In his musical style Purcell inclined to follow the Italians rather than the French, but his native genius resisted any tendency to slavish imitation, and his music is essentially English in its character. England should hold him in high honour, for his is probably the greatest name she can boast of in the sphere of music, and it is no unworthy place that he occupies in the temple of fame. The wording of his epitaph is interesting: "Here lyes Henry Purcell Esq., who left this Life, and is gone to that Blessed Place where only his Harmony can be exceeded."

There are two forms of Church music which we owe to the Restoration period—the Verse Anthem and the Anglican Chant. The Verse Anthem dates back, indeed, to the time of Gibbons, but it was not till the Restoration that it was brought to maturity. The Verse Anthems of this period have elaborate work for the solo

voices, with ritornelles introduced between the various numbers. The chorus work is comparatively slight, often consisting merely of an opening and closing number, sometimes only of the latter. The Verse Anthem was brought to perfection by Purcell.

The Anglican Chant took the place of the old Plain Song chant, which did not suit the taste of the period. In outward form it corresponded pretty much to the Gregorian Chant, except that it lacked the intonation; so that its constituent members were Reciting note and Mediation, Reciting note and Ending. That was the Single Chant. At a later period it was made twice as long so as to include two verses, thus becoming a Double Chant. But the change from Gregorian to Anglican was not merely the change of outward form. The style of the music was altered too. The severe beauty of the Gregorian Chant was abandoned, and the gates were opened through which there was to pour, in course of time, a flood of luscious melody unsuited to the solemn dignity of the Psalter.

We come now to the eighteenth century, and give the names of some of the musicians who are to be remembered for their work in Church music. We mention first Jeremiah Clark, some of whose anthems are much esteemed. Of one, "I will love Thee, O Lord," Dr. Jebb, whose work on the Choral Service we have already quoted, declared that no commentary he ever read so brought out and illustrated the meaning of this wonderful Psalm. Dr. Croft, who succeeded Clark in the Chapel Royal, has a place among English Church musicians of the first rank. His Church Services are much admired, and Sir John Stainer maintained "that one of the finest, if not the finest setting of the Te Deum and Jubilate to which the English Church can point is that by Croft in A." During his life he

published *Musica Sacra*, a collection of thirty anthems, to which was added the Burial Service. This last has been performed ever since at funerals in St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. It is interesting to note that Croft composed no music to the verse "Thou knowest, Lord," for the reason that that by Purcell was unapproachable. Dr. Croft has a lasting place in the popular regard as the composer of St. Anne and St. Matthew, though his authorship of the former has been disputed.

Handel is entitled to be reckoned among English Church composers in virtue of some of his compositions. Although a foreigner, he accepted the musical form established by English Church musicians, and cast his music into this mould. During his term of office with the Duke of Chandos he produced twelve anthems, known as the Chandos Anthems. They were composed to words from the Psalms for soli and chorus with instrumental accompaniment. In his Funeral and Coronation Anthems he has likewise made a notable contribution to the music of the Church. Handel delighted to play on the organ at St. Paul's, and the organist, Dr. Maurice Greene, was on terms of intimacy with him, though they afterwards quarrelled. Dr. Greene composed numerous anthems of considerable merit, but is especially to be remembered for his project of collecting and publishing the finest examples of English Cathedral music. He was not spared to complete the work, but left the material he had gathered to Dr. Boyce, who published the collection in three volumes between 1760 and 1778. By this publication Boyce has done a great service to English Cathedral music, and his collection remains a worthy monument of the composers who during the previous two hundred years had dedicated their talents to the service of the Church of England. Boyce was himself a musician of eminence,

and some of his own contributions to Cathedral music are worthy to be ranked alongside the best that he has preserved in his collection.

After Boyce the style of English Cathedral music rapidly degenerated, and for the next generation there is little calling for special mention. One of the outstanding names at the close of the eighteenth century is Samuel Wesley, who had been brought, at the age of eight years, to Dr. Boyce that he might give his opinion of the child's abilities. Boyce was much impressed with the musical powers of the young prodigy, who afterwards became a Church composer of the first rank. Wesley had a great love for the Gregorian music of the Roman Catholic Church, and used to say that one of the greatest musical treats he ever enjoyed was accompanying the Gregorian Requiem at a Roman Catholic Chapel, the *canto fermo* being sung by about fifty priests while he improvised the harmonies. His mastery over the organ was marvellous, and he had a gift of improvisation such as has seldom been known. He composed much for the Roman Catholic Service, Masses, motets, etc., and was thought, indeed, by his famous uncle, John Wesley, to have been received into the Roman Catholic communion. But Wesley denied ever having become a convert to Romanism. He composed likewise Anthems and Services for the Church of England.

Thomas Attwood was a contemporary of Wesley. He studied under Mozart, and in later life was intimate with Mendelssohn. While still maintaining the dignity of English Cathedral music, he shows a tendency to break away, to some extent, from the stereotyped forms, to write with greater freedom, and to infuse into his work a warmer glow of feeling. These tendencies we find in an even more marked degree in Samuel Sebastian

Wesley, the son of Samuel. He brings forth out of his treasure things new and old, combining the solemn dignity of the older Church music with the freedom and richness of modern developments. "His sacred music," wrote Spohr, "is chiefly distinguished by a noble, often even an antique style, and by rich harmonies as well as by surprisingly beautiful modulations." Among his works special mention may be made of his Service in E, and his great anthems "The Wilderness" and "Blessed be the God and Father." Wesley had the highest conception of the dignity of the art of music, and strove to secure for it adequate recognition at the hands of the Cathedral authorities. With Attwood and the Wesleys Cathedral music in England revived, and during the nineteenth century the torch was handed on through a line of musicians who worthily maintained the traditions of the Church. Such names as Goss, Smart, Macfarren, Sterndale Bennett, Elvey—to mention some out of many—are well known, to all who take an interest in Church music, as composers of no mean ability. But we have not space to enter into any account of their work.

We must now leave the subject of Cathedral music. As we glance back over the history we have rapidly sketched in the foregoing pages, we cannot fail to be impressed by the service which the art of music and the Church have rendered to one another. Music is an integral part of the Cathedral Service. In fact the terms Cathedral Service and Choral Service are synonymous. Wesley was right when he insisted on the heavy debt which the Church owed to music. But no less weighty is the debt on the other side. The Church has provided the field in which English music has found the soil most congenial to it. She has called forth the powers of her musical children, and enlisted them in a service

where there is ample opportunity for their exercise. She has fostered a style which made for purity, dignity, and severe beauty, and has ever set a lofty ideal before the musicians whom she has called to serve her. The result has been the establishment of a school of music of which the nation may be proud, and the enrichment of the Church of England with a store of music which she may well esteem as among her most precious treasures.

Hitherto we have been speaking of the Cathedral Service of the Church of England. Evidently for the celebration of this Service a very efficient musical staff is necessary. Where that is not obtainable the mode of conducting public worship is what is usually called the Parochial Service. Here the Liturgy is recited, not chanted, and there are singings introduced at certain intervals between the various offices. This brings us to the consideration of another side of music in the Church of England. It may be interesting to trace its development.

We have seen what a prominent part the singing of chorales by the congregation played in the Lutheran Church Service. In the Reformed Churches of France and Switzerland metrical versions of the Psalms took the place of the German chorales, and the singing of these had come to constitute the chief musical feature of the Service. The practice was brought to England by the refugees who had found a haven in Switzerland during the persecution under Mary, and soon took a firm hold. "After sermon done," says Strype in his *Annals of the Reformation*, referring to the year 1559, "they all sung in common a psalm in metre, as it seems now was frequently done, the custom having been brought in from abroad by the exiles." "Psalms," says Bishop Burnet, "were much sung by all who loved the

Reformation; and it was a sign by which men's affections to that work were measured whether they used to sing them or not." In 1562 appeared "The whole Booke of Psalmes," by Sternhold and Hopkins and others, "with apt notes to sing them withal." The musical setting consisted of forty melodies collected from various sources. In the following year appeared an edition with the melodies harmonised in four parts by various composers, Tallis among the number. Of special interest is a collection which appeared in 1591, to which the harmony was composed by Daman, because here, probably for the first time, "the highest part singeth the Church Tune." But the innovation did not gain favour at first. Este's complete Psalter, 1594, to which many of the best composers contributed, still gives the melody to the tenor, while the other parts add a simple counterpoint. It is of interest to note that the custom of giving the tunes distinctive names is met with in Este for the first time. The most famous of all the Psalters of those times, however, is Ravenscroft's, which appeared in 1621: "The whole Booke of Psalmes: With the Hymnes Evangelicall and Spirituall. Composed into 4 parts by Sundry Authors with severall Tunes as have been and are usually sung in England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Italy, France, and the Netherlands." The "sundry authors" include some of the most famous names of the time. There are in all ninety-eight distinct tunes, some of them harmonised in different ways by different composers. The melody is in the tenor. "The counterpoint throughout," says Rockstro, "is admirable, and every tune may be regarded as a masterpiece."[1] During the Commonwealth, as might be expected, no contribution was made to the artistic treatment of the Psalmody. The Psalm tunes were sung in unison,

[1] Grove, *Dictionary of Music*, i. 762*b*.

and any attempt to improve the musical effect would have been considered derogatory to the religious earnestness of the reformer. In 1671 appeared an edition by Playford with very simple four-part harmony for men's voices. The melody is still given to the tenor. But in 1677 he brought out another edition with the tunes harmonised for three voices, and here the melody is in the upper part. This edition of Playford's enjoyed great popularity. From a musical point of view it is not to be compared with the work of Ravenscroft, the harmonies being of the most commonplace character.

As we have said, the practice of singing Psalms was received with the greatest favour by the Reformers in England. "You may now sometimes see," wrote Bishop Jewel in 1560, "at St. Paul's Cross, after the service, 6000 people, old and young, of both sexes, all singing together and praising God." While the Choral Service was employed at the cathedrals and churches with full choirs, the music at the ordinary parish churches consisted entirely of metrical Psalms. The clerk read out each line of the words before the people sang, for the benefit of those who had no books or who could not read. At first the music was almost entirely vocal, for organs were to be found only in the cathedrals and large churches. In course of time various instruments, such as flutes, hautboys, clarinets, etc., were introduced to support the singing. Organs too came into general use. In the country churches these were frequently of the "barrel" type, it being found difficult to obtain players for finger organs. Organists were not so easily produced as the Clerk of Trinity College, Cambridge, seemed to fancy in his suggestions for the improvement of psalmody in parish churches, written in 1676. "Any musick master, virginal player, or organ-maker," he writes, "will teach a Parish Clerk how to pulse or strike most

of our common psalm-tunes usually sung in our churches for a trifle (viz., 20, 30, or 40 shillings), and so well that he need never bestow more cost to perform that duty sufficiently during his life." The clerk, he goes on to say, can then teach the young people of the parish "in a week or fortnight's time very well. And thus, little by little, the parish will swarm with organists. It is one of the most easy pieces of performance in all instrumental music to pulse one of our psalm-tunes truly and well, after a very little showing upon an organ."[1]

During the Commonwealth, as we have seen, the Cathedral Service was suppressed, and Church music was confined to metrical psalmody sung in unison, without instrumental accompaniment. "Psalm-singer" became a nick-name for the Puritan. The instructions issued by the Puritan divines for the use of psalmody in worship are interesting: "In singing of psalms the voices to be tunably and gravely ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with understanding and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord. That the whole congregation may join herein, every one that can read is to have a Psalm-book, and all others, not disabled by age or otherwise, are to be exhorted to learn to read. But for the present, when many in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officers, do read the Psalm, line by line, before the singing thereof."

A new metrical Psalter, by Tate and Brady, was published in 1696. It led to considerable division of opinion in the Church. It was smoother and more fluent than the rugged verse of Sternhold and Hopkins. But the Old Version had become endeared by long association. It could claim to be more faithful to the

[1] *Musick's Monument*, 1676.

original than the New. To the popular mind it had come to have something of the authority of Scripture itself, while the New Version was regarded as a mere human composition. It took a long time for the New Version to overcome popular prejudice and to become established in popular favour.

During the eighteenth century there are frequent complaints of decline in the Church psalmody. The congregation do not take such a hearty part as they did, but sit—which appears to have been the customary posture of the worshippers while singing—listless in their places. The number of Psalms is reduced. Complaints are made as to the method of performance. The organist plays the tune in such a way that it is hardly recognisable. The system of "lining out" the verse leads to loss of pitch. But in spite of these indications of the waning interest of the congregations in the metrical Psalms, they still continued to hold their place in the worship of the Church till well on in the nineteenth century.

We turn now to speak of the introduction of hymns into the Church. The practice of singing hymns in worship does not appear to have become general till about the middle of the eighteenth century. It is true that the 1562 edition of Sternhold and Hopkins included metrical versions of the Te Deum, Canticles, Lord's Prayer, and also a few original hymns, set to German tunes; but in later editions these disappear. The earliest English hymn-book was George Wither's *Hymns and Songs of the Church* (1623), for which James I. granted a patent declaring them to be "worthy and profitable to be inserted, in convenient manner and due place, into every English Psalm-book to metre." But this patent was opposed by the Stationers' Company on the ground that it infringed their privilege to print the

"singing-psalms." The music to Wither's hymns was composed by Orlando Gibbons, but they do not appear to have been sung in public worship. During the century that followed, many distinguished writers produced hymns rich in devotional feeling; but these effusions were designed rather for private use than for public worship. In 1707–9 Dr. Watts produced his collection of Hymns for use among the Independent Congregations, and with him modern English hymnody may be said really to begin. But even among the Dissenters Watts's Hymns were not received with enthusiasm. It was really the Methodist revival that led to the general introduction of hymns into divine worship. The singing of hymns was one of the most effective instruments in the evangelical movement. People flocked to the singing and joyfully took part in it. Even in these latter days we have seen the power of music as an agent in revival work. How much greater must it have been at a time when hearty singing by a united congregation was a thing almost unknown! What a new force must have here disclosed itself for furthering the preaching of the Gospel! The Church of England saw the wisdom of imitating the Methodists by making the singing of hymns a feature of congregational worship. Various collections of hymns made their appearance. As early as 1737, before he entered on his evangelistic work, John Wesley had produced one for use in the Church of England; but the soil was not yet ready for the seed, and the book had little influence. In 1760 Madan published a collection of hymns drawn chiefly from Watts and the two Wesleys, Charles and John; and from this time onward the publication of hymn-books rapidly increased. By the end of the century twenty distinct hymn-books had appeared, and within the next twenty years almost a hundred were published for use in the Church of England. The

question of the introduction of hymns into the worship of the various congregations of the Church depended upon the sentiments of the clergy. Where the incumbent belonged to the Evangelical School, there would be readiness to adopt them. But where his sympathies were not with this tendency, there would be unwillingness to permit the innovation. There was a feeling also on the part of many that it was wrong to admit any new matter into public worship without either royal or ecclesiastical authority, and in many cases this contributed to delay the introduction of hymns. Gradually, however, the practice extended until at last it became established.

As there was no express authority for the introduction of hymns into the Church, there was likewise no recognised collection of hymns for use in public worship. To meet the desire for uniformity, Rev. Sir Henry Baker gathered together a committee of clergymen of the Church of England, including many authorities on hymnology, for the compilation of a hymn-book which would be likely to secure general acceptance. They began their labours in 1859, and in 1860 the first edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* was published. The book had an enormous success, and it has become, one may say, the standard collection of hymns in the Church of England.

Of the composers of music for the hymns in use in the Church it is impossible to speak in detail. Dr. W. H. Monk did noble service as editor of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, to which he contributed some excellent tunes. Much of the success of that volume is due to his fine taste. S. S. Wesley, Smart, Dykes, Barnby, Sullivan—these are a few of the outstanding hymn-tune composers who have enriched the Church with some of its sweetest strains. To compose a melody that shall resound on "the lips of thousands" to the glory of God—that is

an aspiration that might well fill the heart with enthusiasm.

> "Might my poor lyre but give
> Some simple strain, some spirit-moving lay,
> Some sparklet of the soul, that still might live
> When I was passed to clay!
> . . . . .
> Death would be sweeter then,
> More calm my slumber 'neath the silent sod,
> Might I thus live to bless my fellow-men
> Or glorify my God."

So wrote the poet in answer to whose prayer it was given to write the hymn, "Abide with me." May we not conceive the same aspiration animating the composers of the tunes no less than the writers of the verses? To many the fulfilment of it has been granted. There are many tunes in our modern hymn-books which have a warm place in the heart of the Church, many musicians who, now passed away, still live to bless their fellow-men by strains in which they enable them worthily to sing the praise of God. It is no small service to the Church to have enriched her with a store of melody of this nature; and among the many musicians who have laid their gifts on the Divine altar, not the least worthy are those who have risen to no lofty heights of musical achievement, but have composed some simple strains which have helped towards the realisation of the pious wish: "Let all the people praise Thee."

CHAPTER IX

MUSIC IN THE CHURCH OF GENEVA AND THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

We treat these two Churches together because in its service of praise, as in so many other matters, the Reformed Church of Scotland modelled itself upon the Church of Geneva. During the religious persecutions in the sixteenth century many English and Scottish refugees found an asylum in that city. We have already seen how the English exiles carried back with them to England the practice of singing metrical Psalms, which they had learned there. In like manner the Scottish refugees, when they returned to Scotland, took with them the Psalter which had been prepared for the congregation of English and Scottish exiles in Geneva. It is to this city, then, that we turn our eyes to trace the origin of the type of psalmody which was to play such an important part in the worship of the Church of Scotland.

When Calvin came to Geneva in 1536 he found the Church there in a state of much disorder. He at once drew up a list of the reforms he desired to see introduced. One of them was congregational singing at public worship. "It is a thing highly expedient for the edification of the Church," he wrote, "to sing some Psalms in the form of public prayers." Thus the

worshippers are encouraged to make similar prayers for themselves, and to render like thanks to God. But as this is something new, Calvin suggests that it may be best to begin with the children and get them to sing clearly and distinctly, the congregation at first following "with the heart what is sung by the mouth," till in course of time they are able to join in the singing. The translation of the Psalms by Marot which was afterwards used at Geneva was not published till 1541. But either Marot's or some other version of the Psalms may have been in circulation before this date, and these may be the Psalms to which Calvin refers. Marot was a French poet of some distinction who produced a metrical version of thirty of the Psalms, at the suggestion of the Professor of Hebrew at Paris, who assisted him in the translation. Marot did not go through the Psalms in order, but selected thirty which appeared to him most suitable for his purpose. The book was dedicated to Francis I. and became very popular. Francis is said to have sung some of the Psalms on his deathbed. At the court of Henry II. it became the custom for the courtiers to select certain Psalms which they called "their own." These were sung to popular melodies. Henry, who was a great hunter, chose the 42nd: "As the hart panteth," which he sang to a hunting air; Catherine de Medici selected the 6th, setting it to the music of a comic song. Marot was not a Protestant; but being suspected of heretical leanings, he fled from Paris and found a refuge at Geneva. There he paraphrased nineteen more of the Psalms and the Song of Simeon. The fifty were published at Geneva in 1543 in an edition prepared for the Genevan Church, with a Preface by Calvin. Shortly after appeared an edition with a dedication by Marot to the ladies of France. At the instigation of Calvin, Theodore Beza undertook the metrical rendering of the

remaining Psalms, and in 1560 the complete metrical Psalter by Marot and Beza made its appearance. This was adopted by Calvin for use in the Genevan Church.

We have referred to Calvin's Preface to the 1543 edition of Marot's Psalter. This is a most interesting document, as it sets forth clearly the Reformer's views on Church psalmody in respect both of words and music, views which were to determine the practice of the Calvinistic Churches for many a day. It is too long to quote here, but we may mention some of the more interesting points in it. Church psalmody, according to Calvin, is a species of public prayer which has been in use in the Church from the beginning; for experience proves that song has great power to move the heart of man to praise God with more ardent zeal. There should be a difference between the music used at table or on occasions of enjoyment, and that employed in Church in the presence of God and His angels. Music is one of God's most blessed gifts, but one to be used with the greatest care. For, as Plato taught, it has power to influence the manners of men, and if evil words, as Paul says, corrupt good manners, much more pernicious do they become when wedded to melody. In Church song there are two sides to be considered, the words and the music. The words must not only be holy, but such as invite us to pray to God and praise Him, to meditate on His works in order to love Him, fear Him, honour and glorify Him. But, as Augustine says, none can sing things worthy of God but he who has received the power from Himself. Hence there can be no better songs for the praise of God than the Psalms of David, "which the Holy Spirit dictated to him. And therefore when we sing them, we are as certain that God has put words into our mouths as if He Himself sang within us to exalt His glory." As to the music, it must not be light and

frivolous, but "should be simple in the way we have put it, to carry weight and majesty suitable to the subject, and even to be fit to be sung in Church, as has been said." Here are the limits clearly marked out within which Church psalmody is to be confined. The words are to be the inspired Psalms of David, the music such as is fitted for the singing of these by the congregation. That was indeed a worthy song-book that Calvin put into the hands of the Church when he gave to it the metrical Psalter. But by restricting it to this, he condemned it to unfruitfulness. What a contrast between the Lutheran and the Calvinistic Churches in this respect! There the Reformation awakened an outburst of song that was to enrich the Church with an endless store of precious treasures. Here the Reformation produced the metrical Psalter, and beyond that—silence. The same contrast holds with regard to the music. The tunes composed for the singing of the Psalms by the congregation in the Calvinistic Churches were excellent, and remain to this day models of what melody for congregational singing should be. But having produced these, music had nothing more to do. There was no ever-increasing store of hymnody to call forth fresh efforts on the part of the musician. There was no side of the service, as in the Lutheran Church, where opportunity was given for the exercise of his skill in free composition. If Calvin had had his way, there would not have been so much as the harmonising of the Psalm tunes for the musician to do, for the Reformer's idea of fitting congregational praise was singing in unison. "These songs and melodies," he says, "which are composed for mere pleasure of the ear, and all they call ornamental music and songs for four parts, do not behove the majesty of the Church, and cannot fail greatly to displease God."

We have seen that many of the melodies of the German chorales were derived from secular sources. This was the case also with the Psalm tunes of the Calvinistic Church. Indeed, it held in an even greater degree here, for there was no body of sacred folk-song for the Calvinistic Church to draw upon as there was for the German. Consequently Calvin could not realise the ideal he set before him in his Preface of having an entirely distinct class of music for the song of the Church. "Even Calvin had to laugh—for the only time in his life—when he saw the most frivolous tunes walking along, chastely and devoutly, hand in hand with the lofty poems of David and Solomon."[1] The work of adapting and arranging the tunes was carried out by Louis Bourgeois and Maître Pierre. The former had followed Calvin to Geneva, and been appointed Cantor in one of the churches, in which office he was succeeded by Maître Pierre. Bourgeois came into conflict with the Church authorities on the question of introducing harmonisations of the Psalm tunes, a practice they would not tolerate. He is said to have been put into prison by them, after applying for a rise of salary, on a charge of having changed the tunes of some of the Psalms without permission. Bourgeois is responsible for some of the best tunes in the Genevan Psalter, the "Old Hundred" among them. In the complete Psalter of 1562 there were in all 125 tunes, two of which were for the Decalogue and the Song of Simeon, which were included in the Psalter. This left twenty-seven Psalms to be sung to the tunes of other Psalms. All the Genevan Psalters published for use in the Church have the melody alone, part-singing being forbidden. But musicians could not refrain from giving a harmonic setting to the Genevan melodies, and Bourgeois, Claude Goudimel, Claudin Le

[1] Schweitzer, *J. S. Bach*, i. 20.

Jeune and others published harmonisations of some of the tunes. Bourgeois set eighty-three of them to harmony in four, five, and six parts. Goudimel published the complete Marot and Beza Psalter in 1565 with the tunes set for four parts. He was a musician of some eminence, and during his residence at Rome had been the teacher of Palestrina. In his settings of the tunes he usually gives the melody to the tenor, but in a few cases to the soprano. In the Preface to this work Goudimel says that he has "added 3 parts to the melody of the Psalms, not for the purpose to have them sung in Church, but for the enjoyment of God at home." Le Jeune's arrangement appeared at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The counterpoint is simple, but melodious and effective. The work had a great success, and went through several editions. Goudimel's and Le Jeune's editions stand in the first rank as harmonised settings of the Genevan Psalter.

Before we leave the Calvinist Church it may be interesting to read the following description, written by a visitor to Geneva in 1557: "A most interesting sight is offered in the city on the week days, when the hour of the sermon approaches. As soon as the first sound of the bell is heard, all shops are closed, all conversation ceases, all business is broken off, and from all sides the people hasten into the nearest meeting-house. There each one draws from his pocket a small book containing the Psalms with notes, and out of full hearts, in the native speech, the congregation sings before and after the sermon. Every one testifies to me how great consolation and edification is derived from this custom."

We turn now to give an account of the music of the Scottish Church. The first attempt to prepare a book of sacred song for the people is found in the volume by the brothers Wedderburn, commonly known as *The Gude and Godlie Ballates.* The Wedderburns were three

brothers, James, John, and Robert, belonging to Dundee. The second brother, John, who was a priest, embraced the Reformed faith, and had to flee to Germany. There he came under Luther's influence, and realised the power which sacred song exercised in the life of the Church. He is believed to have contributed the largest share to the book, though each of the three had a part. The date of its publication is uncertain. Probably it was some time shortly before 1546, in which year John had to flee the country for the second time. It contains translations of some of the German chorales, and metrical versions of twenty-two of the Psalms. There is no music provided. We have no proof that the Psalms in the Wedderburn collection were ever used in public worship. But that they were employed in private devotions is shown by Knox's quoting the Wedderburn version of the 51st Psalm as that sung by George Wishart the evening before his capture at Ormiston.[1]

The first mention we meet with of Psalm-singing in the public worship of the Scottish Church is by a writer who is describing the arrangements made in 1554 for the ordering of the service in the Church at Frankfurt on the Main. It was decided there that the people were "to singe a psalme in metre in a plain tune, as was and is accustomed in the Frenche, Dutche, Italian, Spanishe and Scottische churches." From this we gather that the practice must have been established for some time previous to 1554, but we have no further evidence of the fact.

John Knox had been invited to be pastor of the congregation at Frankfurt, and had been one of a committee appointed to draw up an Order of Service for the Church. There had been difference of opinion in the congregation as to the nature of the form of worship to be adopted, some inclining to the English Liturgy and

[1] Knox, *History of the Reformation*, Book I.

others preferring something simpler. The Form that was drawn up by this committee did not please the former party, and other arrangements were made in Frankfurt. But an English congregation was formed at Geneva in 1555, of which Knox became pastor in the following year, and this congregation adopted the Form of Service which the Frankfurt Church had rejected. This Form was published in 1556. It contains twelve sections in all, ten dealing with the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the Church, one containing Calvin's Catechism, and one a book of Church praise. This last has the following title: "One and Fiftie Psalmes of David in Englishe Metre, whereof 37 were made by Thomas Sternholde; ād the rest by others, cōferred with the Hebrewe, and in certeyn places corrected as the text and sens of the Prophete required." This collection is of special interest as it is the source from which the stream of Scottish psalmody sprang. The whole of the Psalms in this collection and forty-two of the tunes were afterwards included in the Scottish Psalter.

There is an interesting Preface to the collection of Psalms, dealing with the subject of Church praise. After speaking of the virtues of music, it goes on to say that "as there is no gift of god so precious or excellent that Satan hath not after a sort drawen to himself and corrupt, so hath he most impudentlye abused this notable gifte of singinge, chieflye by papistes his ministers, in disfiguring it, partly by strange language, that can not edifie, and partly by a curious wanton sorte, hyringe men to tickle the eares and flatter the phantasies." Here we see the same antipathy to the introduction of any of the higher forms of music as we meet with in Calvin. There is agreement with him also in the restriction of the praise to the Psalms: "And there are no songes more meete then the Psalmes of the

Prophet David, which the holy ghoste hath framed to the same use, and commended them to the Churche, as conteininge the effect of the whole Scriptures." It is interesting also to note the justification adduced for setting the Psalms to metre. It is defended on two grounds: first, that it was an imitation of the Hebrew, where "they that are skilfull in the hebrewe tongue . . . easily may perceive the metre"; and second, that it is an aid to memory, a matter of considerable importance seeing that "the holy ghoste by all means sought to help our memorie, when he facioned many psalmes accordinge to the letters of the alphabet; so that every verse beginneth with the letters thereof in ordre."

As to the music of this Psalter, there were fifty-one tunes in all—a tune to each Psalm. Such tunes, each restricted to a single Psalm, were called Proper tunes. Their origin is uncertain. They do not appear to have been borrowed from any of the Psalm-books already in existence, and may have been specially composed for this work. Bourgeois has been suggested as the possible author.

When and how this Genevan Psalter was introduced into the Scottish Church, we do not know. Probably John Knox was instrumental in securing its adoption, either before or after his return to Scotland in 1559. There is evidence of its employment in 1560 at any rate, the date of the first General Assembly, for in that year was drawn up the Form for the election of superintendents and ministers, which concludes with the 23rd Psalm; and this Psalm appears in the 1556 collection for the first time. In 1560 the number of Psalms in the Genevan Psalter was increased from fifty-one to sixty-five, and in the following year to eighty-seven. These additions were afterwards incorporated in the Scottish Psalter. The popularity of Psalm-singing

in Scotland is indicated by the fact that when Queen Mary arrived at Holyrood from France (1561), five or six hundred of the citizens serenaded her with instrumental music and the singing of Psalms—"as badly sung and as much out of tune," says the French chronicler, "as possible. Oh! what music!"

Thus far there had been no official Psalter of the Scottish Church, that in circulation being the one in use in the Genevan congregation. In 1562 the Assembly granted a sum of £200 to help to procure the plant necessary for printing a Psalter, and by 1564 the book was completed; for an Act of Assembly of that year ordains that every minister, exhorter, and reader shall have one of the Psalm-books lately printed in Edinburgh. Another impression of this book appeared in 1565, similar in all respects to that of the previous year. These two may be regarded as constituting one edition, 1564–65. This was the Old Scottish Psalter, which held the field till 1650. It contained the eighty-seven Psalms of the Geneva collection, forty-two from the English Psalter of 1562, and twenty-one new contributions. Various editions of this Psalter appeared from time to time. Of special interest is that published in 1596 by Henry Charteris. In it each Psalm has a prayer appended to it in harmony with the tenor of the Psalm. It also contains a set of Doxologies called Conclusions, thirty-two in all, one to suit each form of metre, intended to be sung at the close of the Psalms. The authorship of these Conclusions is unknown. They are not found in later editions of the Psalter, with the exception of that of 1635, where only the Conclusion in common metre is printed. It is possible that the introduction of these prayers and Conclusions into the 1596 Psalter was due to a desire to conform to Episcopalian practices.

Some of the editions of the Psalter are of interest

because of the light they cast on the musical rendering of the Psalmody. Originally the practice was to have a tune assigned to each Psalm, as in the case of our modern hymn tunes. These tunes, as we have said, were called Proper tunes. In the Genevan Psalter of 1560, in which the original fifty-one Psalms were increased to sixty-five, the expedient was adopted of referring some Psalms to the tunes of others, a practice that was retained when this Psalter was incorporated in the Scottish Psalter. In an edition of the latter published in 1611 the further step is taken of setting three tunes of four lines each to a number of Psalms, in place of the Proper tunes which had been associated with those Psalms; and this leads up to the introduction, in an edition of 1615, of a new class of tunes called Common tunes, with a name assigned to each. The number of Common tunes in this edition was twelve. Some other musical innovations appear in an edition published at Aberdeen by Raban in 1629. He provides harmonies for the twelve Common tunes, and introduces a new style of Psalm tune, called "in Reports," of which he gives two examples. Tunes in Reports are tunes in which a line or part of a line is given out by one part, and after a certain interval taken up in imitation by the other parts one after another. The tune "Bon Accord," which is still to be found in our Psalters, is an example of such a tune, and was, indeed, one of the two introduced in this edition of Raban's. The first edition of the Psalter fully harmonised was published in 1635. Of this a handsome reprint has been edited by Rev. Neil Livingston, with an interesting Preface. There are in all 104 Proper tunes, thirty-one Common ones, and eight in Reports. Besides those in our major and minor modes we meet with a considerable number of tunes in the Dorian mode, and a few in the Phrygian and Mixolydian. An interest-

ing feature of the book is the upside-down arrangement of the parts, so that singers seated at opposite sides of a table can read off the same book. This seems to point to the existence of choirs who would find such an arrangement convenient. As usual, the melody is in the tenor. The proportion of tunes of Scottish origin is comparatively small, but they are among the finest of the collection, including such imperishable gems as French, York, "plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name," and "noble Elgin," "the sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays."

The Old Scottish Psalter of which we have been giving an account held the field from 1564 to 1650. Before we proceed to speak of the changes which followed, we may pause to try to form some conception of the musical conditions in the Church during this period, which may be regarded as the golden age of Scottish psalmody. Evidently the ruling idea in the minds of the Church authorities was to make the praise congregational. All the provisions regarding the ordering of the praise are framed with that view. The artistic side of musical worship does not seem to have appealed to them at all. They did not, indeed, go the length of Calvin and interdict all part-singing. While the harmonised Psalter did not appear till 1635, there is evidence that the Psalms were sung in harmony from an early date. When Durie, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, was brought back in triumph to St. Giles', the great crowd who accompanied him took up the Psalm "Now Israel may say," and sang it, so the historian relates, in four parts. But anything of a more ornate description, any instrumental music or anthems or "curious singing," anything that would convert any portion of the service into a musical performance to which the congregation were merely to listen, was utterly at variance with the principles underlying the whole

ordering of the service. From the very beginning the Church authorities undertook superintendence of the music. They exhorted the people, men, women, and children, "to exercise thame selves in the psalmes, that when the Church convenith, and dois sing, thai may be the more abill togither with common heart and voice to prayse God."[1] They were aided by Parliament, which in 1579 ordered all gentlemen and yeomen with incomes above a certain figure to have a Bible and Psalm-book under certain penalties. The music admitted into public worship was all of a kind suited to the abilities of the congregation. There was no chanting or music calling for any special skill in the rendering of it. The plain Psalm tune with a note of the music for each syllable—that was accepted as the true type of music for Church praise. Variety was lent to the Psalmody by the diversity of metres adopted—about one-third of the versions are not in common metre—and by the employment of Proper tunes. The introduction of Common tunes towards the close of our period was probably in the interests of the congregation, who may have had some difficulty in learning so many Proper tunes.

The singing of the congregation was led by a precentor, who was called the "uptaker of the psalms." Arrangements were made for his payment out of the revenues of the Kirk. Sometimes the office of the precentor was combined with that of reader, or teacher of the Sang Schule. The Sang Schule was an institution of pre-Reformation times for the training of boys in chanting. After the Reformation, when there was no longer need of boys for this purpose, it is probable that the Sang Schule would be given over more or less to general education. But doubtless instruction in the singing of the Psalms would form an important part of its work.

[1] *First Book of Discipline.*

At the public services Psalms were sung at least twice, once before and once after the sermon. In some churches the diet of worship conducted by the minister was preceded by one conducted by the reader, and at this service singing of Psalms seems to have taken up a good part of the time. It was not the practice in the Scottish Church at first for the precentor to "line out" the Psalms. That was not adopted till a later date, when it was proposed by the English divines at the Westminster Assembly, and agreed to somewhat reluctantly by the Scottish representatives. For the most part the leading of the singing was done by the precentor alone. Sometimes the scholars of the Sang Schule sat beside him, and there is occasional reference to his receiving further assistance. As we have said, the arrangement of the parts in the 1635 Psalter seems suited to the convenience of a choir, but we meet with almost no traces of the existence of choirs in this period. The praise in public worship was confined to the metrical Psalms. Some Psalters have the prose Psalms printed in the margin, but that was purely for reference, and no attempt was made to perform them. In some of the Psalters there are likewise inserted a few hymns, called spiritual songs; but these seem to have been intended only for private use, and there is no evidence of their ever having been used in public worship. Among the grounds on which the proficiency of the people in the rendering of the Psalms may be explained, not the least important is the regular practice of family worship. Every morning and evening the Psalms were sung at private devotions in the home. No wonder that the tunes became familiar to the people, and spoke so powerfully to the heart!

The Old Scottish Psalter was not without rivals in its claim for recognition at the hands of the Church. A determined attempt was made to substitute King

James's version for it. That pedantic monarch had undertaken the production of a new metrical rendering. He died before it was finished; but the work had been completed by the Earl of Stirling, and was published in 1631. Charles I. authorised its use in church, but so strong was the opposition that its introduction was not pressed. After a few years, however, Charles returned to his project of having it recognised as the official Psalm-book of the Church, and in 1634 forbade the printing or selling of any other. A new and amended edition was published in 1636, and this it was determined to force upon the Church. But the introduction of the Psalm-book was only part of a wider scheme, viz., the establishment of the Episcopalian form of worship in the Church of Scotland. A service-book—known as Laud's Liturgy—was prepared, and a royal mandate issued that the new Prayer-book and Psalm-book were to come into use on a certain date in 1637. But the attempt to carry out the mandate roused a storm of opposition. There was a tumult in St. Giles' when the service was read from the new Prayer-book for the first time. The whole country rose in indignation at this attempt to impose a new form of worship upon it by royal authority; and with the rejection of Laud's Liturgy, the fate of the royal Psalm-book associated with it was sealed.

It was not on its merits, but rather owing to the manner in which the attempt was made to thrust it upon the Church, that the King's version was rejected. The need for some new version had for some time made itself felt. In the Guild Library volume, *The Metrical Psalms and Paraphrases*, will be found a narrative of the course of events which led up to the adoption of the New Version based upon that of Francis Rous. It was the outcome of the Westminster Assembly of 1643–49, which aimed at the establishment of a uniform Church

government, doctrine, and worship throughout the realm. That uniformity after which the Assembly strove remained an unrealised ideal. But the Church of Scotland has no reason to complain of the fruits she has gathered from the movement; and the metrical version of the Psalms, which she owes to it, holds almost as warm a place in the affection of her sons as the Shorter Catechism. The Psalm-book was not adopted, however, in the form in which it came from the Westminster Assembly. It was subjected to further revision by a committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The Assembly finally approved of it in 1649, and in 1650 it became the recognised Psalm-book of the Church. From that day to the present it has held its place in the Church as the Authorised Version of the Psalter. Proposals have been made from time to time to revise it, but the wise conservatism of the Church has resisted any such attempt. There is a rugged strength and simple directness about the verse that is more effective than any polished diction. The metrical Psalms are dear to the heart of the Scot. They have been familiar to us from our childhood; to them cling many of the most stirring memories of our national religious life. Though they no longer form the sole text of our Church praise, they hold a worthy place in the service; and it will be a bad day for the music of the Church of Scotland when the metrical Psalms are excluded from her public worship.

One of the noteworthy features in connexion with the Old Psalter was the superintendence which the Church authorities had all along exercised over the music. From the beginning the music for the Psalms had been printed along with them, and that had probably been the practice throughout the whole lifetime of the Old Psalter. But, unfortunately, with the issue of the New Psalter this care for the music appears to have ceased.

No tunes were printed with the Psalms, nor does there appear to have been even a separate tune-book issued. The result was that from this time onwards a musical decline began to show itself. Probably this neglect of Church music was due to the Puritanic spirit that was abroad. The more barn-like the structure of the church and rude the music of the service, the more did it suit the tastes of those who regarded all attention to the artistic side of Church worship as a sign of spiritual weakness. We have seen that the practice of "lining out" the Psalms was adopted in deference to the wishes of the English Commissioners at the Westminster Assembly. This also may be reckoned among the elements which contributed to the degeneration of Church music; for to make a break at the end of every line, and wait till the next is recited, must be fatal to good singing. Curiously enough this practice, which was a novelty at this time, became so firmly established that it came to be regarded as essential; and when, in course of time, an attempt was made to improve the singing by doing away with it, the change was vigorously opposed.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the music of the Church was in a deplorable condition. No interest was taken in it by the Church authorities. No tuition in music was given in the Sang Schules, as had been the case after the Reformation. Few people had skill to read music even if it had been provided for them. The number of tunes in use was reduced to twelve. When a proposal was made in Aberdeen, in the middle of the century, to introduce a larger selection, the Session intervened and unanimously resolved that the tunes proposed should not be used in public worship, "and they appoint their precentors to sing in all time coming the twelve church tunes commonly sung in Scotland." The leading of the singing was left to the

precentor, and to him much of the degradation of the Psalmody of the Church may be attributed. "Few or none at last," says a writer about the middle of the century who sought to improve the Psalmody, "thought of learning Church-music; and both the Art and Excellency of it was so much forgot, that when a Precentor was wanted, the principal Qualifications requisite were Poverty and a loud Voice for reading the Line, it being a Matter of no Consequence whether he knew a Note of Music or not; for the Tenor, which was the only Part attempted, and which was conveyed only by the Ear from one Generation to another, was now so corrupted by Graces and Quavers, as they called them, that the Tune was entirely defaced, and the original Note (which they knew nothing about) had no more Share of the Performance than the Nonsense they thought proper to add to it."[1] As an instance of the corruption of the tunes by these grace-notes, this writer says that an old precentor with whom he remonstrated on the absurdity of the practice, "replied with a good deal of Briskness, that he did not value what any Man intended, and that he believed the People of the present Generation knew nothing of the Matter; for his Master was allowed to understand that Affair thoroughly, and he told him, there ought to be eight Quavers in the first note of the *Elgin* Tune."[2] "Had these nonsensical Graces," he continues, "been the same everywhere, it would have

[1] Bremner, *Rudiments of Music*, p. xii.

[2] *Ibid.* In the Highlands this system of expanding the Psalm tunes by elaborate graces and ritornelles was carried to such a pitch that the original tune was quite lost sight of, and a new and sometimes beautiful melody evolved. Mainzer has published a collection of a few of these Gaelic tunes as used in Ross-shire and the neighbouring counties. It is interesting to find how strong is the resemblance in character between these elaborations of the Psalm tunes of the Presbyterian Church and the similar expansions of the melodies of the Gregorian chants of the ancient Church.

been the less Matter; but, on the contrary, every Congregation, nay, every Individual, had different Graces to the same Note, which were dragged by many to such an immoderate Length, that one Corner of the Church, or the People in one Seat, had sung out the Line before another had half done; and from the whole there arose such a Mass of Confusion and Discord as quite debased this the noblest Part of divine Worship. This they called the old Way of singing, for which there were many Advocates, though in fact it was the new, or rather no Way at all."

Such was the condition of congregational psalmody in the first half of the eighteenth century. About the middle of the century a movement to improve it was made in Aberdeenshire. Some soldiers of General Wolfe's regiment, which was quartered in Aberdeen, were heard practising the singing of Psalms in the fashion that obtained in some of the village churches in England. Their leader was found to be capable of giving instruction, and his discharge was obtained so that he might devote himself to teaching the new method of singing. He began work in the parish of Monymusk, and went through some of the neighbouring parishes carrying with him a few of the best singers to assist him. His aims were simple and praiseworthy, viz., to abolish all grace notes and restore the melody to its original simplicity; to do away with the dragging which was the natural consequence of this system of "quavering," and take the tunes at a pace which would permit of the rhythm of the melody being felt; and to restore part-singing, which seems to have fallen into desuetude. The only innovations at first were the introduction of a pitch-pipe to give the pitch at the start, and the placing of the singers together in a gallery, that they might act as a choir. But these very moderate innovations roused

opposition. To some it seemed profanation of the Sabbath to use a "herdboy's instrument of music," to quote one objector, in the church. The movement gained force, however, and the instructor was asked to come to Aberdeen to give a demonstration of the new method. He brought with him about seventy singers, who gave an exhibition of their powers. This was the occasion which called forth the resolution of the Aberdeen Session referred to above. But the Synod reversed the decision of the Session, and in spite of considerable opposition on the part of the champions of the old style, the movement for the reform of the Psalmody made a lasting improvement on the Church music of Aberdeen. John Wesley bears witness to the excellence of the singing in the parish in which this movement began: "About six went to the church (at Monymusk). It was pretty well filled with such persons as we did not look for, so near the Highlands. But if we were surprised at their appearance we were much more so at their singing. Thirty or forty sang an anthem after sermon with such voices as well as judgment that I doubt whether they could have been excelled in any cathedral in England."[1] The mention of an anthem here seems to prove that the attempt to improve the singing had led to more serious innovations than those referred to above.

The example of Aberdeen instigated other towns to follow. The Town Council of Edinburgh appointed a master to teach Church psalmody. Schools were opened throughout the city. By decree of the General Sessions an act was read from the pulpits of the city urging heads of families to encourage their children and servants to attend these schools. The practice of reading out the Psalm line by line was discontinued in one of the churches. A book of tunes with harmonies was published

[1] May 7, 1761.

by the writer whom we have quoted above on the evils of "quavering." The revival spread to Glasgow, and similar measures were taken there for the improvement of the Psalmody.

From the time of the Reformation it had been the practice to confine the singing in church to the metrical Psalms. Some of the old versions of the Psalter, as we have seen, contained a few sacred songs, but there had been no proposal, so far as we know, to use these in public worship. The question of supplementing the Psalter by a collection of paraphrases of various portions of Scripture occupied the attention of the Church for a long time. When the New Psalter was in course of preparation, it seems to have been contemplated to add some Scriptural songs in metre, and Zachary Boyd was asked to undertake the work of translation and "to report his travels"; but nothing seems to have come of the project, and the New Psalter was issued without any supplementary matter. The subject was taken up again in the Assembly of 1741, and by 1745 a collection of forty-five Paraphrases was ready. But there was strong opposition to the introduction into public worship of any such "uninspired" compositions. In 1751 the Assembly approved of their use in private families, but this collection was never sanctioned for public worship. In 1781 a larger collection of sixty-seven Paraphrases and five Hymns was approved, and its use permitted "in congregations where the minister finds it for edification"; and this collection has held its place in the worship of the Church to this day. The introduction of hymns came during the next century. Some of the Dissenting Churches led the way. In 1870 the Assembly of the Church of Scotland authorised the publication of a book of hymns and sanctioned it "for the use of such congregations as may wish to avail themselves of it." The musical editor of

this hymnal was Dr. W. H. Monk. It contained 200 hymns, but this number was more than doubled in a later edition, the music of which was edited by Dr. Peace. In 1898 a joint hymn-book for the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland was issued—a much larger collection, with Sir John Stainer as musical editor.

The nineteenth century witnessed a great improvement in the music of the Church. The precentor began to be reinforced by a choir. The repertory of Psalm tunes was largely increased, sometimes perhaps by tunes which did not rise to the dignity of those of the old Psalters. The Free Church led the way in the endeavour to provide a collection of Psalm tunes, and in 1852 produced the *Scottish Psalmody*, a collection of tunes in use in all the Presbyterian Churches. The other Churches followed in turn with collections of their own. From the time of the Reformation all instrumental music had been excluded from the worship of the Church. The first attempt to introduce an organ into divine worship in the Church of Scotland appears to have been made in St. Andrew's Church, Glasgow, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The instrument in question had been made by the famous James Watt, and had come into the possession of the Kirk-Session of St. Andrew's. It was used at the weekly rehearsal of congregational praise, and the minister, Dr. Ritchie, conceived the idea of employing it at divine service on Sundays, a proposal which seems to have received the hearty support of the congregation. Accordingly in 1806 a petition was presented to the Town Council of Glasgow, as Patrons and Heritors of the church, craving permission to remove certain seats in the church in order to make room for the organ. The petition was refused; but the proposal to introduce the instrument into divine service

was not allowed to drop, and in the following year the first step was taken by employing it one Sunday to accompany the concluding Psalm. The innovation caused a great commotion in the city. The Town Council called upon the Presbytery to intervene, and after much discussion that court declared the use of an organ "contrary to the law of the land, and to the law and constitution of the Established Church, and prohibited it in all churches and chapels within their bounds." As Dr. Ritchie had undertaken not to continue the use of the instrument while the subject was under discussion, the actual employment of the organ on this occasion was limited to the accompaniment of a single Psalm at one diet of worship.[1] It was not till after the middle of the century that the question of introducing instrumental music was revived, and to Dr. Robert Lee of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh, belongs the honour of having carried through this and other reforms in the conduct of divine service. He had made the innovation of reading prayers from an Order of Public Worship. He went a step further and had a harmonium to support the Psalmody. These innovations caused considerable stir, and the matter came before the General Assembly of 1864. In spite of the contention of those opposed to the movement that such innovations were contrary to the law of the Church, it was decided that they were to be forbidden only when they caused dispeace in the congregation. The practice of having instrumental music spread, and in course of time it became the general custom. The Free Church, after a severer struggle with the conservative party, followed the example.

It is interesting in these latter days, when instrumental music has become so general, to recall the views

[1] *History of St. Andrew's Parish Church, Glasgow*, by Rev. James Thomson, pp. 26 ff., 56 ff.

of Professor Beattie of Aberdeen University on the subject, at the close of the eighteenth century. Writing to Dr. Hugh Blair of Edinburgh on the improvement of Church music, he admits that instrumental music appears to be both Scriptural and rational. But he believes that its introduction would not be practicable, for even if the Assembly were to sanction it, there are scarce sixty churches in Scotland, he thinks, that would be able to afford an organ or pay an organist.

The introduction of instrumental music was but part of a wider movement to improve the whole ritual of the Church. The old idea, inspired by the reaction first against Roman Catholicism and afterwards against Episcopacy, that the plainer and ruder the ritual of divine service, the more did it testify to and tend to foster the worship of the spirit, began to lose its power. It was realised that there is nothing essentially reverent in ugliness, that the praise of the sanctuary does not become more spiritual by being made discordant, nor the ritual of the Church more acceptable to God by the neglect of care on the part of man. There was manifested a new zeal to make everything connected with the public worship of God chaste and beautiful. The Church Service Society was instituted for the preparation of worthy forms of worship. The introduction of hymns gave a fresh stimulus to the service of praise. A new mine of sacred song was here opened up from which rich treasures have been drawn to lay upon the Divine altar. Other forms of Church music, such as the anthem and chanting of prose Psalms, which had been supposed to be alien to the spirit of Presbyterianism, became recognised features of public worship. Under these influences the whole worship of the Church became more dignified and chaste, and the musical side of the service more melodious and artistic.

CHAPTER X

THE CONGREGATION

We turn now to consider the various constituent elements of the musical worship of the Church at the present day, and to discuss some of the questions which suggest themselves in connexion with them. We begin with the contribution of the congregation, which is in some respects the most important of all. In most churches the singing of sacred songs by the congregation constitutes much the largest part of the musical service. The other musical portions of the service are something introduced over and above; the congregational song is recognised as the central feature. It is the counterpart to the united prayer of the worshippers. We kneel together and join in common prayer. In like manner we stand together and join in common song. Calvin and the Scottish Reformers were right in maintaining that congregational psalmody was but another form of congregational prayer.

But the question at once suggests itself: Why should the worshipper participate in an audible manner in the praise any more than in the prayers? Why should we not content ourselves with listening to the rendering of the music by a body of trained singers and participating in spirit? "Why is the whole congregation to sing," asks Burney,[1] "any more than preach, or read prayers? Indeed

[1] *History of Music*, iii. 64.

it seems to have been the wish of illiterate and furious reformers, that all religious offices should be performed by *Field-preachers* and *Street-singers*; but it is well known by all who read the Scriptures, or hear them read, that both *singing-men* and *singing-women* were appointed to perform distinct parts of religious rites among the ancient Hebrews as well as the Christians; and it does not appear by any passages in the Bible, by anything which the most ancient and learned commentators have urged concerning the performance of the Psalms, or by Rabbinical traditions, that they were originally intended to be sung by the multitude, or whole congregation indiscriminately. *Singing* implies not only a tuneable *voice*, but *skill* in Music: for Music either is or is not an *Art*, or something which nature and instinct do not supply; if it be allowed that title, study, practice, and experience may at least be as necessary to its attainment as to that of a mechanical trade or calling. *Every* member of a conventicle, however it may abound with cordwainers and taylors, would not pretend to make a shoe or a suit of cloaths; and yet in our churches *all* are to sing."

The argument against the congregation participating in the performance of the musical side of the worship may be summed up under these two heads: first, that it should suffice that they participate in spirit as they do in the prayers, such spiritual participation being the essential element in worship; and secondly, that they have not the skill requisite for co-operation in the musical service. Let us consider what may be said in reply.

In what has been said in the Introduction we have already suggested some of the grounds on which the vocal participation of the congregation in the musical praise may be defended. If music be the art in which

the emotions most readily seek utterance, then it is natural for those whose hearts are full of the feelings which animate us in religious worship, if they have any sense of music at all, to take direct part in the songs in which these feelings find expression. Of course in the worship of that God who is a Spirit, it is the disposition of the spirit alone that avails. But there is more likelihood of spiritual participation when the worshipper joins in the song with his voice than when he stands merely listening to others. When it is asked why the worshipper should take part in the praise any more than in the prayers, the significance of the new element introduced by the music is overlooked. True, musical praise is a kind of prayer; but the two are not identical. The difference between them may be compared to that between a painting and an engraving. Both represent the same subject, but there is a warmth of feeling about the painting which is not in the engraving. So it is with praise. What colour does to the picture, music does to our worship. It supplies the glow of personal feeling; and the argument which justifies the introduction of music into worship, justifies also the assigning to the congregation active participation in the praise, that they may thrill, each one with his personal feeling, the strain which rises from the lips of all. The contention that nothing more than participation in spirit is necessary might be a valid reason for refusing to allow music to have any place in worship at all; it does not warrant the exclusion of the congregation from taking part in the musical praise, once we have admitted it.

The other argument against allowing the congregation to take part in the musical side of the worship need not detain us long. If the only music suited for performance in church were such as called for a high

degree of musical proficiency, then there might be some cogency in it. But there is no reason why the music of the Church should be restricted to compositions of this class. From the earliest times there has been a species of Church song in existence befitting the solemnity of public worship, and well within the powers of the ordinary congregation. The higher and more elaborate forms of Church music are later developments. One does not dispute their right to admission into the worship of the Church; but one does resent the claim that they are to supersede the simpler style of music, suited to the abilities of ordinary worshippers. The absence of any pretension to musical skill on the part of the great mass of Church worshippers is a sufficient reason for keeping the music, which they are expected to perform, simple and such as will appeal to them; but not for shutting them out from all participation in the praise and condemning them to silence.

There is then, in the musical service of the Church, a place, and a very important place, for the singing of the congregation. This is one part of the worship in which all, or nearly all, can take part. What could be more impressive than to hear a large body of people joining together with all their heart in the singing of some well-known Psalm or hymn, and in one grand swelling volume of tone sending up their praise to their Father in heaven? No singing on the part of the choir alone, however beautiful, can take the place of this part of Christian worship. There may be, probably there must be, much that is musically defective in the singing of the congregation as a whole. We need not look for the precision, the expression, the quality of tone that may be obtained from a trained choir. But it has features of its own which compensate for these defects. There is a solid grandeur and rugged majesty about it which lend it a peculiar

charm. What a difference there is, for instance, between the singing, say, of the Old Hundred or St. Anne by the choir alone—even though it be not at the headlong pace which many choirmasters seem to consider proper —and the massive, stately rendering of these grand old tunes by the whole congregation! Even from a musical point of view the latter, with all its defects, is to be preferred, because more suited to the character of the music. And even if it were not, one would readily sacrifice something of musical excellence for the sake of the effect upon the worshippers. How cold and languid does the service appear when the singing is done by the choir alone! The worshipper in the body of the church has a sense of isolation. His own feelings, the words of the Psalm or hymn, the strains of the music, if it be music of the right kind, all invite him to join. But none beside him takes part. He fears to attract attention if he raises his voice. He stands dumb, listening to others doing for him that which he feels he would like to do for himself. The singing of the choir may be good, but it does not stir the feeling as would the united song of the congregation in which he could take part. In such a case we may say that this side of congregational worship has failed of its object.

Now it is a question for the Church seriously to consider whether congregational singing is as effective as it might be. Do our congregations join heartily in the rendering of the praise? Does one feel that there is a grand body of tone rising from the worshippers? We fear that there is only too much reason to believe that congregational singing is on the decline. Many of the congregation make no attempt at all to take part, but stand and listen, their whole attitude suggesting that this is a part of the service in which they take little interest, and for which they feel no responsibility. Those

who do lift up their voices do so in a half-hearted manner, as if they were afraid to attract attention. The effect is not that of a united body whose voices blend together to form one solid volume, but of various units scattered over the church feebly striving to show their sympathy with the singing of the choir. One has but to think of the grand body of sound produced by a revival meeting, or by the ministers of the Church in the General Assembly, to realise the feebleness of our ordinary congregational singing. That many do join in and try to do their part, we readily admit; but none the less the fact remains that congregational song, in the sense of a solid, combined volume of tone, is sadly on the decline.

What are the reasons for this falling-off in congregational singing? Can anything be done to remedy it? The fault is not altogether with the congregation. Too often those who have the conduct of the music show little regard for the interests of the congregation. For instance, the rate at which many organists insist upon taking the Psalms and hymns accounts for a great deal of the lack of heartiness in congregational singing. How *can* the congregation be expected to sing, if the stately tunes are rattled over at a pace that almost leaves the choir panting behind? Again, the place taken by the choir in the rendering of the praise often leads to the discouragement of congregational singing. One hears it sometimes said that the better the choir, the worse is the congregational singing. We do not believe that this need be so, though it frequently is the case. But it indicates a danger against which choirs and choirmasters need to be on their guard. The better the choir, the better should be the congregational singing, if the choir realise what is its function in this department of the music of the Church. It is there to lead the praise of the congregation, not to monopolise it; to give steadiness

and precision to the singing of the whole body of worshippers, not to usurp their place in the rendering of the praise. Evidently a choir that sings in this spirit will give a different rendering of the music from what would be attempted were it singing by itself. For one thing, the rate of singing will require to be considerably slower, if the congregation is not to be left behind. Then further, in the case of a choir which attempts to realise its function of leading the praise of the congregation, the delicacy of expression, which might otherwise be attained, will have to be forfeited. It is manifestly impossible for the congregation to put in *pianos* and *fortes*, *crescendos* and *diminuendos* and the like, in their rendering of the Psalms and hymns. If the choir do that, then the result is simply that the congregation become bewildered, and cease to sing as heartily as before. "The moment," said Dr. Monk, "a choir, by its delicacy of performance, challenges the ear of the congregation, it virtually says, 'Listen to me'; but it stops the voices of the people, who are so lost in the act of attention that they forget to sing." To our mind it would be far better, in view of the musical capacity of the average congregation, that nothing of the kind should be attempted, that the marks of expression printed in some hymnals should be altogether disregarded, and only massive, stately effect aimed at. The result, from the point of view of the choir alone, may be something of a compromise. But the mistake is to consider the matter from the point of view of the choir alone. The result to be considered is not the singing of the choir by itself, but the singing of choir and congregation combined. And so far as this side of the praise is concerned, that choir is the best which sacrifices something of its musical efficiency, in order that the singing of the congregation as a whole may be improved.

It is questionable whether some of the more recent intended improvements in Church praise have not defeated the end they were designed to advance. Has the introduction of instrumental music improved congregational singing? It is open to question. One would think that the atmosphere of sound with which it surrounds the congregation would form a direct encouragement to their participation. Yet experience does not always bear this out. One sometimes hears more hearty congregational singing where there is no organ. The people seem to realise their responsibility more, and endeavour more faithfully to perform their part. Again, the introduction of hymns has not been, from the musical point of view, an unmixed blessing. On other grounds there are comparatively few who will question the wisdom of the step. It does seem an anomaly that Christians should have been content so long, in that part of public worship in which all might join, to sing, as Coleridge put it, "as Jews, or at best men in the abstract, without a Saviour."[1] But so far as the music is concerned, hymns have not always tended to the improvement of the singing. Many of our hymn tunes are excellent — melodious, easy, and effective, admirably suited to the words to which they have become wedded in the mind of the congregation by long association. But many of the more modern ones are far from being suited to congregational singing. Melody has sometimes been sacrificed for the sake of harmony, and harmony of a most chromatic character. Sweet and melting effects have been aimed at which, however agreeable in themselves—and they are apt sometimes to be 'loathsome in their own deliciousness'—are not suited to congregational singing. There are many hymns in which the congregation do

[1] *Table Talk.*

not feel able or inclined to join. The melody does not appeal to them, and one does not wonder at it, for there is very little melody about them. There is no broad, massive effect to impress the people. In fact the tunes are not designed for congregational singing, and the congregation make little attempt to take part in them.

But it is possible that the cause of the unsatisfactory state of our congregational singing lies deeper. Have our Church authorities ever faced the question of what is exactly the kind of music that is suited to the powers of the average congregation? What do we expect the people to do when they are called upon to sing a Psalm or hymn? Is the congregation to be regarded as a great choir in which the several parts are adequately represented, and which may be expected to give a rendering of the harmony set before it? Such an assumption is utterly out of accordance with the facts of the case. How many in our congregations have books with the music? How many could read the music if they had? Then even supposing they were able to do so, and could take the part which suited their voice, what about the balance of the parts? And how can we expect the several parts to sing effectively when the representatives of each are not placed together, as in a choir, but are scattered all over the church, a soprano here, a tenor there, and so on? Yet in the face of these facts we put our hymn-books containing so many hundred hymns, some of them with painfully chromatic harmonies, into the hands of our ministers and choir-masters, with liberty to roam over the whole field in the selection of the congregational praise, and marvel that the singing of the congregation is so poor. The wonder is not that it is so poor, but that it is not far poorer than it is. What we require

to do is to face the situation in a practical way. In his *Studies in Worship Music*[1] Mr. Spencer Curwen gives Henry Smart's account of the manner in which he did this when appointed to St. Pancras Church. The vicar and he discussed the kind of music they were to aim at. "Suppose we make the service congregational," said Smart, "what are we to do? Are the people to practise? The thing is impossible. Out of 1000 perhaps 200 are able to read music, and how are we to secure a proper representation of the four parts? The only part-singing I understand is when the parts are balanced. To attempt to make the congregation sing in harmony is only to magnify the haphazard of a voluntary choir. The proper way of treating the congregation is the old way, the way of the Germans and the Dutch, whose countries are the home of the chorale—to make them sing in unison, or in octaves, which is musically the same thing. This, again, is not enough. In a hymn of six or eight verses the same harmony repeated gets tiresome, and if the organist is what he should be, he will vary the harmonies according to the verbal expression, keeping them ecclesiastical in style."

One would like to see this method given a thorough trial. No doubt it seems a retrograde step to restrict the congregation to singing the melody in unison or in the octave. But if they are not to sing thus, the great majority of them will never sing at all. While the congregation sing in unison, the choir might render the harmony. That was the plan adopted by Dr. Monk in the church in which he was organist, and according to his account it worked well. But for the purpose of encouraging the congregation to find their voice again, it would be better, for a time at any rate, that the choir

[1] First Series, p. 167.

also should confine itself to singing the melody in unison, and giving a strong, firm lead to the congregation. This would allow of the pitch being lowered, where necessary, so as not to carry the voices beyond the range of the bulk of the congregation, and would likewise leave the organist free to vary the harmonies in the manner proposed by Smart. Our own feeling is that if we are ever to have congregational singing in the real sense of the word, it is along these lines that it must be sought. Of course it would be preferable to have the congregation singing in harmony. But what is the use of shutting our eyes to the facts which make such a consummation unattainable? If it is impracticable to have part-singing by the congregation, then let us take steps to encourage them to do what is within their powers. No doubt there would be something to regret in the loss of the harmony from the choir. But there would be compensations. There would be the rich, full body of tone from the congregation. There would be the setting aside of a great many hymn tunes which, having no singable melody, are quite unfitted for congregational use, and the selection mainly of those of solid, stately character, suited to the united song of a large concourse of people. And there would be, likewise, more probability of having such tunes rendered at a pace befitting the dignity of their character, not rattled over in the unseemly fashion one so frequently hears. "I *won't* play the tunes fast," said Henry Smart, speaking of the requests sometimes made to him by some of the congregation to do so, "and I tell them why. First, because it is vulgar; second, because it is musically wrong (for all music has its proper time); and third, because there is no authority for fast playing."

Such seem to us the lines on which the improvement

of congregational singing should be sought. We do not dogmatise on the subject, because we cannot speak from experience of the success of such an experiment as we propose. It is possible that it might not produce in practice the results that we anticipate from it. But at any rate it seems worthy of trial, for it is but the attempt to recognise and meet the facts which are there, however we may shut our eyes to them. That the great bulk of the congregation must sing the melody, if they are to sing at all, is a fact there is no gainsaying. Why should we not encourage them to do it? Why should we not decide to make that portion of the praise, in which we expect the congregation to take part, of a character suited to their modest musical abilities?

But now let us turn to consider the material provided for the congregation to sing. The place of honour must be given to the old Psalm tunes. Here we have the type of music eminently suited for congregational singing, the melodies clearly defined, strong, broad, stately in character. Apart from the historical associations which cling to them, and which should secure them a lasting place in the affection of all Scottish congregations, they have an intrinsic worth which should make us cherish them as among our most precious musical treasures. One regrets that they are not so frequently sung as one would like. They have been displaced in great measure from the position they held in congregational worship. The younger generation find the Psalm tunes too solemn and severe. They wish something sweeter and more sensuous. Consequently hymns bulk more largely in our worship than the old Psalms and Paraphrases. It is a great loss to our congregational praise. We cannot afford to banish the Psalter from our Church song. The metrical version of the Psalms which is in use in the Scottish churches may not be a perfect work of art, but there is a rugged

strength and simple sincerity about it that commend it to men who are more concerned about the verities of religion than the niceties of language. If we cannot have chanting of the prose Psalms—and whether that is within the reach of the average congregation, we shall discuss presently—it is well that we should have something to keep our congregational praise in touch with the Psalter, the great song-book of the Church. The tunes associated with the metrical Psalms are a precious heritage which we should do well to cherish. There would be fewer complaints about the lack of heartiness in our congregational singing if the Psalms had a more prominent place in the praise-list. One fears that many of the older tunes are being allowed to fall into oblivion. How many of our congregations are familiar with Martyrs and Caithness and Elgin? A German who interested himself in our national psalmody, Joseph Mainzer, has reproached us with being indifferent to the treasures we possess in the Psalm tunes handed down from Reformation times, while on the Continent Protestants cherish their inheritance of Church song as a sacred trust. If there was truth in the charge when he made it in 1845, much more is it the case now, when the hymns have gone far to oust the metrical Psalms from their place in the worship of the Church. We trust that in time the reaction will come, and the grand old Psalm tunes again receive in our Church praise the recognition that is their due.

In theory the chanting of the prose Psalms may likewise be regarded as belonging to the department of congregational praise. But so far as our present conditions in Scotland are concerned, it becomes in practice a matter for the choir. If the congregation are to take part in it, all would require to have Psalters with the pointing marked; and that is very far from being

the case in any of our congregations. Then there are the inherent difficulties of chanting to be overcome. It is by no means an easy matter to do at all, a very difficult matter to do well. And we must remember that in Scotland chanting is a comparatively recent innovation, so that our congregations have not, as in the case of other Churches, been educated to it from their earliest years, and do not take to it as the most natural method of rendering the Psalms. As matters at present stand with us, chanting is a matter mainly for the choir, and we shall defer further consideration of it till we come to speak of their contribution to the praise. There is no reason, indeed, why those of the congregation who can take part should not do so. Congregations should be exhorted to procure pointed Psalters, and encouraged to join in the chanting of the Psalms. Those who have the selection of the psalmody should confine themselves for a time to a comparatively small repertory, with the view of making the people familiar with the rendering. It may be a long time before we can expect our congregations to join in this portion of the praise, but that consummation will come only by the loyal co-operation of all in the congregation who can take part, and an adequate recognition, on the part of our Church authorities, of the limitations of the musical powers of our congregations.

In addition to the Psalms, the material of our congregational praise is made up of hymns. Here there is a wide field to draw upon, and care must be taken, in the selection of the hymns for use in public worship, that only such are introduced as are befitting the dignity and solemnity of the service of the sanctuary. This applies to the music no less than the words. Sometimes ministers select the praise for the Church service, paying regard only to the words, without any thought of the music with which they are associated. That is a mistake.

To a person of musical taste the tune is no less important than the words, and a good hymn may be robbed of all its power of appeal, if not rendered positively distasteful, by the worthless melody to which it has been wedded. Now there are many tunes in use which, to our mind, are utterly unfitted for Divine worship. There is, for instance, the ranting tune with its boisterous refrain: there is the jiggling tune with its restless movement: there are the sentimental, languishing, sugary tunes which soon pall upon the taste. The plea that is usually made for the introduction of inferior music is that it appeals to the great body of the people, who have no educated musical taste. But is this the only kind of music that appeals to them? What of the Psalm tunes which our fathers sang? Did they make no appeal to the people? What of the chorales which have been the music of the German Church since the Reformation? Have they not a lasting place in the heart of the German peasantry? Even if it were the case that worthless music is the most likely to catch the ear of the people, is it right for the Church to suffer the introduction of music which it knows to be degrading in its tendency? For that is really the effect of much of the music which we have in view. It is no mere question of taste, of rejecting that which does not suit the likings of a certain section who fancy that their judgment is the criterion of propriety. Much of the hymn-music which we are asked to admit on the ground of its popularity is, we believe, positively debasing in character. If there are many whom it attracts, there must be many to whom it is repulsive, many who feel it to be profanation of the House of God to have such worthless music employed in Divine worship. It should be the aim of the Church to elevate and refine, and she is unfaithful to her vocation if, in her effort to secure popularity, she admits into the

service of the sanctuary anything that is degrading in tendency, and unworthy the dignity and solemnity of the occasion.

There is the less excuse for the introduction of worthless music, seeing that there is such a large repertory of excellent hymn tunes to draw upon. Let us glance at the contents of our modern hymn-books and note the nature of the musical material they provide for our congregations. There are first of all the Plain Song melodies, which are admirably suited for congregational singing. Even when they involve some departure from our modern tonality, as, for instance, in the second last note of "Veni Emmanuel" ("O come, O come, Emmanuel"), the people seem to take to the change quite kindly. Of course, the particular cadence we have cited is familiar to us in some Scottish songs, such, for instance, as "John Anderson, my jo,"[1] which may explain the readiness with which it is accepted. One is glad to note a tendency to introduce more of these Plain Song tunes into our modern hymnals. In the 1904 edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, the number extends to seventy; and in the *Mission Hymn-book*, recently published by the Church of Scotland, twenty-six are included. When one thinks of the class of music usually associated with Mission services, one cannot but feel gratified that the attempt should be made to introduce a worthier type of popular tune into such meetings. As we have said in speaking of Gregorian music, Plain Song lacks the regular rhythm of modern music. In adapting the Plain Song melodies to our modern hymns, the plan is sometimes adopted of imposing on the former a rhythmical structure, similar to that of our ordinary hymn tunes. But occasionally this involves alteration of

[1] Unfortunately the beautiful cadence of this song is sometimes altered by editors to make it accord with our modern tonality.

the melody, and even where it does not, the introduction of a regularly recurring accent robs the Plain Song melody of much of its characteristic charm. If one compares the version of "Veni Creator" as given in the *Church Hymnary* (No. 136, "Come, Holy Ghost") with the version given in the *Mission Hymn-book*, just referred to (No. 167), one will realise the difference between the two styles. No doubt the absence of clearly marked rhythm in the melody may cause a feeling of strangeness at first, which may seem likely to make the popularising of this style of tune a somewhat slow process. But any difficulty on this head may not prove so serious as we anticipate. Ordinary people have not so keen a sense of rhythm as the cultured musician. Our congregations do not trouble themselves about a beat or two being left out of a bar when there is a long note to be held; and it is possible that the freedom of rhythm in Plain Song melody, so far from causing any trouble, may actually prove grateful to the popular taste. One other feature of these old melodies which makes them suited for congregational use is the unison rendering they demand. As we have seen, unison singing is that which the great majority of the congregation practise. It may be a matter of some difficulty to get it adopted in the case of Psalm tunes and hymn tunes which the choir, and a certain number of the congregation, have been in the habit of singing in harmony. But here is a style of music specially designed for unison singing. There can be no disinclination on the part of the singers to overcome before we persuade them to give these tunes in unison. And where they become familiar to the congregation, and are heartily joined in, the effect will be such, we believe, as to convert many to the conviction that unison is the proper method of congregational song.

Another excellent type of tune, of which we have

several examples in our hymnals, is the German chorale. There is one serious drawback, indeed, connected with the use of these tunes—the difficulty of getting them rendered at anything approaching the slow pace that is proper. We do not expect our congregations to sing them at the rate they are sung in German churches. That would be too much to look for. But we do expect that they shall be treated as something entirely different in character from the modern hymn tune. To take a chorale such as "Now thank we all our God," or "Ein feste Burg," at the same pace as Warrington or Aurelia, is simple profanation. Yet many organists seem to have no conception of the intrinsic difference in character of the two types of tunes, and rattle over the solemn, majestic melody of the chorale as if it were the kind of tune that requires to go with a swing. Before inserting a chorale in the list of praise in any strange church, one would do well to satisfy oneself of the orthodoxy of the organist on the point of *tempo*. The chorales, too, lend themselves to singing in unison. They have been admirably harmonised by some of the great German composers, notably Bach among the number; and one finds these harmonisations sometimes given in modern hymn-books. If sung by the choir alone as a kind of anthem, these settings should prove very effective. Or again they would form an excellent organ accompaniment to the unison singing of choir and congregation. But our experience is that they are not satisfactory if used in the same way as the ordinary harmonisations of hymn tunes, and that if the attempt be made by choir and congregation to sing the chorales in harmony, the treatment should be much simpler and broader in effect than in the settings of Bach.

In addition to these hymn tunes from ancient or outside sources, there is the great body of our modern English hymnody. Here is a rich storehouse of melody upon which

to draw, comprising a great variety of types. There is, for instance, the older class of tune, such as St. Anne and Tallis's Evening Hymn—models of what congregational tunes should be. There are modern examples of the same class, such as Westminster and St. Leonard, in which the composers have preserved the breadth and dignity of style which characterise the old tunes. Then there is the modern type of hymn tune, of which we may cite Aurelia and Hollingside as examples, in which there is a note of sweetness and a warmer glow of feeling than we meet with in tunes of the older type. The music is of a more intimate character and reflects more closely the spirit of the words. In the more modern tunes this subjective tendency is sometimes carried to an extreme. The music borders on the sentimental, the melody becomes subsidiary to the harmonic treatment, which is frequently of a markedly chromatic character. This last type of tune is not so well suited for congregational singing. It is more of the nature of a part-song designed for performance by the choir. It lacks the strength and majesty, the bold outline of melody and breadth of treatment that are essential in music intended for congregational use. It were well to avoid this type of tune if we wish the congregation to take part. Much more to be avoided, though for a different reason, are the ranting, jiggling tunes to which we have referred above, which are supposed to be the kind of music likely to appeal to the popular taste, but which by their inherent vulgarity and debasing tendency are quite unworthy of admission into the solemn service of the House of God. But even with these omissions there still remains a wide selection of excellent hymnody, thoroughly suited for use in public worship. It would be well, in view of the limited musical powers of our congregations, not to strive after too large a repertory.

Let those who have the selection of the hymns choose with care, confining themselves mainly to those which they wish the people to take home to their hearts, and which are likely to prove a strength and comfort to them on their pilgrimage through life. The ideal is not that the congregation should sing with hymn-books before them, painfully striving to fit the unfamiliar words of some new hymn to a melody which they are hearing, perhaps, for the first time. No, let the hymns chosen be such as are well known and dearly prized, such as have often afforded the worshipper solace, perhaps, in hours of doubt and trial: let the tunes be those which have become identified with the words of the familiar hymn by long association: let the congregation sing thus out of the fulness of the heart strains which give utterance to the deepest feelings and aspirations of their religious life, and there will be little ground to deplore the lack of fervour in our congregational singing.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHOIR AND THE ORGAN

THE primary duty of the choir is to lead the singing of the congregation. We have already touched upon some of the points that require to be noted in connexion with its work in this department, and need not repeat them in detail. But we venture again to draw attention to the broad principle to be kept in mind—that the whole method of singing adopted should be determined by regard to the interests of the congregation. In his practice with the choir the conductor should not be listening merely to the choir before him. He should see in imagination the body of the congregation behind them, and be asking himself what is the style of singing that is most likely to carry them along with the choir. The ends to be aimed at are breadth and fulness. These are the very points that choirs are sometimes most apt to disregard. They think of nicety of expression, of fineness of phrasing. The consequence is that the congregation become timid, and hesitate to join with heartiness in the singing lest they be left singing alone. As an instance of what we mean by the inexpediency of attempting any refinement of phrasing, take the line from the well-known hymn:

"One Lord, one faith, one birth."

One sometimes hears choir and organ make a complete

break at each comma. Whether such a method of treating the organ is permissible at all, is open to question. There can be no doubt, at any rate, as to the disconcerting effect upon the congregation of these sudden breaks in the volume of tone. The congregation do not make them, and finding themselves suddenly bereft of the support on which they have been accustomed to rely, become timid. We do not believe that such a style of singing is desirable. Whatever makes the congregation afraid to sing with heartiness is injudicious. Rich, full, sustained tone—that, to our mind, is what the choir should aim at in its rendering of the psalmody. Especially would we emphasise the *sustained* tone. That is a point on which many choirs and choirmasters are very weak. They are more concerned about the precision with which each note is sung at the right beat than about filling up the gap between the beats by sustained tone. Yet in view of the broad effect which is such a desirable characteristic in congregational praise, this sustaining of the tone is a matter of the greatest importance.

Although nicety of expression or of phrasing should not, we believe, be aimed at by the choir in leading the congregational praise, that is no reason why the quality of tone should not be good. The fact that the choir is intended to lead the congregation is no justification for the singers forcing their voices, and endeavouring by piercingness of tone to dominate the praise. There is a tendency in this direction sometimes in small choirs in rural districts. In these days when so many extra subjects are being introduced into the educational curriculum, one wonders that more attention is not paid to the subject of voice production. A little instruction on elementary principles would do an enormous amount of good. It would certainly tend to improve the singing in country churches,

where the services of a qualified organist or choirmaster are not available. We need not look for any ambitious effort in the way of chanting or anthem in a village choir which can boast of no trained musicians. But surely it is not too much to expect that the rendering of the Psalms and hymns shall be not, as it often is, harsh and discordant, but sweet and tuneful, such as we can listen to with pleasure and join in with heartiness.

Let us turn now to consider the work of the choir in those other parts of the musical service in which severer demands are made upon its powers. We shall begin with the chanting of the prose Psalms. As we have said, this is a matter of such difficulty that it becomes in great measure a matter for the choir alone. One longs to see it more generally taken part in by the body of the congregation, but at present this prospect seems far from likely to be realised. The great advantage of rendering the Psalms by chanting is that by this method we can have the whole of a Psalm rendered at one time. In the metrical version only a few verses can be sung in the service, as this way of rendering the Psalms takes much longer than chanting. And four or five verses are, after all, but a poor substitute for the Psalm in its entirety. Of course there are compensations in the metrical version. It gives a freer field for music to show its power, with the result that there is produced a tune which makes much more direct popular appeal than the somewhat restricted musical form of the chant. So it is well that we should have both methods of treating the Psalms represented in our Church worship—the metrical version for the grand collection of noble tunes which it has called forth, the prose chant for the opportunity it affords of introducing much larger portions of the Psalms into public worship. The Psalter has from the earliest times been the song-book of the Church. While we welcome

the introduction of hymns, we trust that they will never displace the Psalms from their rightful pre-eminence. Whatever tends to make the Psalter familiar to the people is to be encouraged; and on this ground the practice of chanting the Psalms regularly at public worship is to be esteemed a most beneficial and laudable one.

Chanting is a kind of musical elocution, and the great aim to be kept in view is to make the enunciation of the words of the passage perfectly distinct. The general fault is to take the recitation too quick, with the result that the words are all run together into an inarticulate gabble. There are two systems of chanting in use, the Anglican and the Gregorian. We have already given a description of the structure of the two kinds of chant in former chapters. Each system has its advocates at the present day; and on either side claims are made as to the superiority of the one system, and charges are brought forward as to the deficiencies of the other. It may prove of interest to summarise the arguments adduced.

On behalf of the Anglican chant it is urged that it is much more consonant to modern taste than the Gregorian. It is freer in character; the melody has a wider range; the resources of modern harmony and modulation are taken advantage of. It is tuneful aud popular in character, and is much less likely to become monotonous than the Gregorian, in virtue of the wider scope provided by the Double Chant, and the fact that it is not sung in unison. To keep to the ancient system of chanting is really, it is argued, to put back the hands of the clock. Why should we return to a style of singing that was evolved when the art of music was in its infancy? This Plain Song melody may have been congenial to the musical taste of a people upon whom the beauties of the world of harmony had never dawned, but that is no reason

why we, "starving ourselves in the midst of plenty," to use the phrase of one of the disputants, should turn our back upon all the resources of modern music, and adopt a barbarous and uncouth style of chant simply because of its antiquity.

So far of the arguments on the one side. Let us now hear what the defenders of Gregorians have to say. First as to the claim that the Anglican Chant is more consonant to our modern taste than the Gregorian, that, of course, must be admitted at once. But is that, after all, a recommendation? What is the result of this modern flavour about the music? That it comes to us bringing with it associations from the concert-room and the theatre. There is nothing distinctively sacred about the character of the music, even at its best. And it is not always at its best. There are many Anglican Chants in use so sensuous in tone, so luscious and languishing in character, as to be fitted for the effusions of some love-sick swain rather than the sacred dignity of the Psalter. Now whatever may be said of Gregorian music, all must admit that there is an essentially sacred character about it. We feel we are breathing the atmosphere of the Church. It is never frivolous, never sensuous, never suggestive in any way of worldly association. True, there is a certain monotony about it. But that can never be avoided in a chant where the same music has to be repeated for verse after verse. The device of the Double Chant, by which the Anglican method seeks to introduce variety, makes comparatively little difference in the feeling of monotony, and is further open to the objection that the second half of the chant, with which a new verse begins, may sometimes express an entirely different sentiment from that of the first half. As to the unison rendering of the Gregorians, that is, after all, the method that the people naturally adopt, and if we wish

the congregation to take part, there is much more likelihood of their doing so with unison than with part-singing. If the chant be accompanied by the organ, variety can be lent to the rendering by occasional change in the harmony of the accompaniment.

But the chief argument upon which the defenders of Gregorians rest their case is the greater flexibility of that form of the chant, whereby it is able to accommodate itself much better to the words. In chanting the music should be subsidiary to the words. The great aim is to secure distinctness of enunciation, and wherever the exigencies of the music lead to an artificial method of articulation, that must be regarded as a blemish. Now what is the nature of the Anglican Chant? It is written in bars, with an accent falling on the first beat of each bar. It is a rigid mould into which the words must be forced at whatever cost of sense or natural rhythm. Sometimes a syllable has to be stretched over several notes; sometimes two or three syllables are compressed and sung in the time of one; sometimes a weak syllable falling on an accented beat receives a false emphasis. Now it is claimed that in the Gregorian Chant these defects are not present. All through the principle is to give the words the first place, and to make the music subordinate to them. There is no rigid mould into which the music must be forced. There are no regularly recurring accents to which the words must accommodate themselves. Where an accent is introduced in the music, it is made to fall upon the word which naturally receives it according to the sense. If there is no word to be accented at the part of the verse where the musical accent would fall, the accent is omitted. Such are the lines upon which the Gregorian Chant proceeds, and it is claimed for it that it provides a much more natural and intelligent rendering of the Psalms than the Anglican Chant.

On the question of the facility with which skill in chanting the Psalms may be acquired, both systems claim superiority. The adherents of the Gregorian system contend that, seeing the setting of the Psalms in the Anglican method is artificial, it is quite impossible for a congregation to know when the recitation ends and the accented syllable falls, unless they have a Psalter with the pointing marked; whereas in the Gregorian Chant, once they are familiar with the Tones, they soon come to know where the inflexion falls, because it simply follows the natural rhythm of the words. On the other side, we may cite Dr. Dykes: "The rhythms and metres of the Gregorian chants are so different, that a psalm pointed to suit one chant will not suit another. These changes of rhythm are very pleasing, but create great practical difficulties; for you cannot have your Psalter pointed once for all and then select your chants. You must have each psalm pointed for its own chant. This cripples one very much." And he goes on to speak of the further difficulty in accompanying the Gregorian Chants caused by the peculiarity of their tonality. "Take, for instance, the fourth tone. Who really knows how to harmonize this? And to hear an unskilled organist labour through it, with harmonies utterly crude and irrational, is no small penance to musical ears. I have occasionally heard the Gregorian chants very finely accompanied. But generally the practical difficulties which attend their successful rendering are so imperfectly overcome, that the Psalms, which should form one of the most delightful parts of the service, become a very 'pain and grief.'"[1]

Such, then, are the two systems of chanting. Where eminent authorities may be found ranged on either side, it would be presumptuous for us to seek to dogmatise.

[1] *Organ World*, September 1, 1888.

We would only venture to say that so far as our personal feeling goes, we cannot but recognise the cogency of two of the objections brought against the Anglican Chant —the rigidity of the musical framework to which the words have to be adapted, and the lack of devotional tone in much of the music.

Hitherto we have spoken of the work of the choir in leading the praise of the congregation. Let us turn now to that department of church music which is reserved for the choir alone, viz. the anthem. This is something quite distinct from the congregational praise, something introduced over and above. The congregation are not expected to take part in it with their voice, but to join in spirit. The execution of the anthem is left to the choir alone; and here is their opportunity to aim at that musical excellence which they are content to forgo while leading the congregational praise.

Just as there are some who contend that the singing should be entirely left to the choir, and that the congregation should take part only in spirit, so on the other hand there are some who insist that there should be no part of the praise of the Church in which the congregation do not take direct part, and protest against relegating them to the position of listeners in any portion of the musical service. We do not agree with this contention. It is right that there should be the opportunity for the congregation to raise their voice in song to God, as they do in the Psalms and hymns. But it is right also that there should be much fuller use made of the service which music in its higher forms can render in deepening the devotion and stimulating the reverence of the worshippers. That music can render efficient aid in this respect, all who have any musical sense at all will readily admit. Are there not many passages of Scripture, for instance, which, wedded to beautiful

music, have acquired an added charm, and are brought home with new force to the heart? There are some parts of the Bible which we feel it is not enough to have simply read. There is a music latent in the poetry which seems to long for expression. Take, for example, the opening verses of the 40th chapter of Isaiah: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." Can the voice of the reader ever inspire them with such pathos as they receive in the setting of Handel? Who that knows the music of the master can ever read these words again, or hear them read, without recalling the tender solace that breathes in the noble recitative that opens the "Messiah"? Or who can hear that despairing cry of the Saviour on the Cross, "Eli, Eli, lama asabthani," as it is rendered in the Passion Music of Bach, without feeling a thrill of emotion such as the voice of no reader of the sacred narrative could ever inspire? To any person of musical feeling the anthem, in which the aid of music is enlisted to interpret the poetry of Scripture, is one of the most solemn and impressive parts of the service. True, the congregation take no direct part in the performance, but they can participate in spirit. Even when they have not the musical knowledge to enable them to appreciate the work in its artistic aspect, they may be deeply susceptible to the influence of the music. While jealous of any attempt to encroach upon our congregational singing, we still think that fuller advantage might be taken of the devotional stimulus which music in its more artistic forms can thus supply. There is a repugnance, and very properly so, against the tendency to turn the services of the Church into musical performances to which people may be drawn as to a concert. We have no sympathy with the attempt to entice people to church by any extrinsic attractions, making the music the chief feature and the worship and preaching

subordinate to it. We wish those only to come to church whose motive is to worship God. But if we find that good music is helpful to us in our worship, if it can make our hour of devotion more solemn and peaceful, if it can touch the heart and kindle the emotions, and by its strains help to waft us to a purer atmosphere, then do not let us despise its aid because some may abuse it; but let us use this, one of the noblest of the arts with which a bountiful Father has enriched His children, in His worship and to His glory.

The practical questions connected with the selection and performance of the anthem depend so much upon the varying musical powers of the choirs concerned that it is vain to attempt to lay down any general rules. What is easily accomplished in one church is utterly impracticable in another. Even where the musical forces at one's disposal are comparatively weak, however, much may be done by a judicious selection of music. There are many excellent anthems quite within the powers of an ordinary village choir. Take, for instance, Farrant's "Lord, for Thy tender mercies' sake." Here is a beautiful little anthem making no severe demands on the ability of a choir that is in any sense worthy of the name. There is no reason why this, and many another anthem of like simplicity, should not form a part of the musical service in any country church where it is possible to secure the attendance of the choristers at practice. The rehearsing of such music would give the members of the choir a keener interest in their work. The difficulty of getting singers to attend practice with regularity is often, we believe, due to the fact that there is so little to interest them when they do come. The preparation of the Psalms and hymns does not provide sufficient variety, and much of the labour that is expended in the endeavour to secure refinement of expression is, from

our point of view, so much waste of time. It would be much better directed to the preparation of a simple anthem for performance at divine service. In some country churches it is the practice to have the anthem sung during the taking of the Offering. To our mind this is too much suggestive of relegating what should be regarded as an integral part of the service to the position of a mere stop-gap. Where there is no independent accompaniment for the organ, it were well that the attempt should be made to sing the anthem unaccompanied. The singing of the choir would be much improved; for as a general rule the result of having organ accompaniment is that the instrument is relied on to put in the required expression, to cover all blemishes, and to supply all defects. And apart from the benefit to the choir, the effect of the performance would be much enhanced. The most effective of all choir-singing is unaccompanied. There is an idea in the minds of many choirs that unaccompanied singing is a matter of extreme difficulty. Why should it be so? What is there in a simple anthem, such as we have instanced, to prevent a choir with the least pretension to musical power from performing it without accompaniment? The fact is that many organists so spoil their choirs by regularly accompanying them at practice that the singers never attain any self-reliance. Where there is a well-balanced choir sufficiently strong in point of numbers to secure fulness of tone without any straining of the voices, we do not see why the attempt should not be made to render a simple anthem without accompaniment.

Where the services of a fully qualified choir are available, some more elaborate style of anthem, whether Full or Verse, may be attempted. Here again there is a wide selection of excellent music, for, as must be evident from the account we have given of the English composers, this

is one department of church music which has been enriched by the labours of some of our most distinguished musicians. In the Verse anthem the employment of the solo voice lends a fresh charm and power to the appeal of the music. In some quarters there is a feeling that the introduction of solos into a church service is to be deprecated. We do not believe that the objection to them is well founded. To our mind the solo voice lends a more personal note to the music, and makes it speak with more directness and power to the heart. It is the musical expression of that subjective tendency which we have seen to be so characteristic of Protestantism. Anything in the nature of a mere musical exhibition, such as is suited to the concert platform, is, of course, out of place in the church; and probably it is repugnance to any suggestion of the kind that inspires the objection that is sometimes taken to solos. But when the solo is performed in the true spirit, there will be no thought of listening in critical spirit to a piece of musical display, but rather devout response to the intimate appeal which the music makes to the religious feelings.

Whether it is advisable to have the occasional rendering of a solo, not as part of a Verse anthem but as an independent item, is a question upon which there may be difference of opinion. There are many passages of the Bible set for solo voice by some of the great composers which might, on occasion, be introduced with good effect in the course of the service. At the sacred seasons at which the outstanding events of the Saviour's life are commemorated, a solo might be introduced from some of the great oratorios or kindred works. Thus, for instance, what more appropriate than to have at Easter, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," or at Christmas some selections from Bach's Christmas Oratorio? Or again the effect of the sermon might be much enhanced by

having a musical setting of the text, where such exists, performed at the close. Have we not sometimes listened to a sermon on some text which was familiar in the musical setting of one of the great masters, and felt with what persuasiveness and power the music would have made its appeal thereafter? It is difficult to see on what logical grounds the occasional use of solos in this manner can be objected to. What one does protest against is the introduction of a solo as a mere piece of display. That is intolerable. Most deplorable of all is the practice, which we regret to learn is not infrequent, of admitting the performance of the drawing-room song of quasi-sacred character into divine service. The kind of song we refer to has some suggestion of sacredness about the words, but absolutely none about the music, which is of the most vapid, sentimental character. And this is thought worthy of a place in the solemn service of the Church! No words are too strong to condemn such profanation, and we can only marvel that any minister should ever permit it.

Would it be desirable, supposing it were practicable, to introduce a more elaborate musical work in place of the anthem, and to have the service interrupted, by a kind of sacred concert, as took place in the Lutheran Church with the Cantata? We do not think so. Circumstances have changed since the time when the Cantata was the recognised form of Church music. The Church is no longer the chief field in which the art of music finds opportunity to display its power. Music has secured a place of its own, and the close union of religion and music which, in the earlier times we refer to, was a necessary stage in the historical development would now be felt to be an artificial combination. Not that we desire to see such works as Bach's Cantatas banished from the church to the concert-room. One

feels that the true place for them is the church. But they are on too large a scale for an ordinary service. The best method of performing them, in view of the changed conditions, seems to be, not to introduce them into an ordinary service, but to have a religious service on the occasion of their performance, in order to induce the proper frame of mind in which to listen to them. This is the case, also, with the Passion Music of the great master. It is no oratorio to be presented in the concert-room to an audience who come merely to listen. It is a religious celebration in which a congregation of believers participate, and as such should be performed in church and accompanied by religious worship.

We turn now to speak of the service rendered by the organ in the music of the Church. It has a double part to play—first to accompany the singing, and secondly to act independently and provide instrumental solos, called voluntaries, at certain parts of the service. In the former capacity it supports the singing of the congregation by flooding the church with music, not drowning the voices of the congregation, but encouraging and supporting them, removing that feeling of isolation which makes the worshipper afraid sometimes to raise his voice in praise, pouring around all an atmosphere of music which seems to offer a direct invitation to join in the common song. In this work of accompaniment much variety may be lent to the rendering of the praise by the manner in which the organist uses his instrument. Where the singing is in unison he is free to introduce varied harmonies. Of course care must be taken to make the harmonic setting appropriate to the character of the tune and the sentiment of the words. In the accompaniment of Plain Song hymns and Gregorian chants, for instance, the harmonies should reflect the peculiar tonality of the music. "To dress up

ancient tones with diminished 7ths, and all the devices of modern music, is a thing to be abhorred; far better leave them alone altogether. The player should transfer himself in spirit to the old days; he should forget that he has ever heard modern music, and play what he would have played had he lived before it was invented; so will he make the modal music a thing of beauty, and worthy of its place as worship music"[1] The same thing holds in a minor degree of the old Psalm tunes. Chromatic harmonies are out of place here. It is like decking out an athlete with a maiden's gewgaws. Besides the variety that may be lent to the congregational singing by change of harmony, the organist can also give fresh interest to the tune, even when the original harmony is retained, by the varying tone-colour secured by manipulation of the stops, and also by the introduction of different kinds of melodic ornamentation. When he has a thorough knowledge of counterpoint, the amount of material at his disposal in the way of ornamentation of this kind is endless in its variety, and every new verse of the hymn he is accompanying may be invested with fresh interest.

Of the work of the organist in accompanying the choir, it is not necessary to speak. For here he has an organ part specially provided for him by the composer of the anthem, and it would be unbecoming for him to take any liberties with it. There is the same opportunity as in the former case, of course, for the display of good taste in the employment of the stops. But otherwise he is tied to his part. The situation is quite different from what it is in the case of a hymn tune, where he has merely a vocal score before him and has really to construct an organ part for himself.

[1] *Modern Organ Accompaniment*, by A. Madeley Richardson, p. 146.

We turn now to the other function of the organ, the performance of voluntaries. These should always be regarded as an integral part of the service. The solemn strains of the noble instrument, of all instruments that which seems most suited to the house of prayer, inspire a feeling of reverence in the heart of the worshipper as he prepares himself, at the beginning of the service, to take part in the worship. The majestic roll of its tones at the close follows him as he leaves the church to go forth again to the world. The function of the organ in these opening and closing voluntaries is to deepen the feeling of reverence which should fill the heart of the worshipper as he enters or leaves the House of God. From first to last he is reminded that the atmosphere he breathes here is sacred, that here is the place where all worldly thoughts and earthly cares should be laid aside. It inspires through the ear the same feelings as the vision of the patriarch, when he beheld a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it: "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

If such is the purpose of the voluntaries, then evidently the music to be performed must be selected with care. The original practice, as the name seems to imply, was for the organist to improvise, and this is still the course adopted by some organists. Given the necessary genius, it may be accepted as the best method, for it enables the organist to adapt the music to the occasion, and reflect in the voluntary the spirit of the service. But geniuses are scarce, and there are few who have the gifts that justify them in attempting to improvise. Nothing could be imagined more formless and insipid than the incoherent succession of chords and fragments of melody that one generally hears in churches where the organist attempts to improvise.

As a general rule it would be far better that some organ composition should be selected for performance; and this brings us to the question of what kind of music is suitable for the purpose. At once we may set aside such as by its associations calls up feelings unsuited to the occasion. For instance, we have actually heard part of the overture to Tannhäuser played as the opening voluntary. Any worshipper who was acquainted with the music in its original setting would at once recognise the impropriety of employing it as a voluntary. Then apart from their associations there are some kinds of music that one hears performed as voluntaries, which by their intrinsic character are quite unsuited for use in divine worship. Such, for instance, to confine ourselves to one or two familiar types, are the sensuous sickly-sweet melody designed to tickle the ear by its cheap sentiment, the flashy show-piece with its exaggerated contrasts of tone-colour, and the noisy vulgar march with which the congregation are sometimes, as it were, hustled out of church. The inherent worthlessness of music of this kind is sufficient to ban its use in public worship. A more difficult question is to decide what we are to admit when we confine our selection to music which is recognised to be excellent in quality. How shall we determine what is to be regarded as sacred, where the music is purely instrumental, with no words associated with it to give it a sacred character? Some maintain that any music which is inherently good is virtually sacred, and would admit into the church service extracts from the great compositions of the classical composers. We do not agree with this. True, it is a difficult question to decide what constitutes sacred music. Perhaps the most satisfactory solution of the difficulty is the simple one proposed by Spitta, the biographer of Bach: "Church

music is music begotten in the womb of the Church."[1] That criterion is helpful, at any rate, in the determination of the style of organ music suitable for performance in church. It is the type which was evolved in the Church by the precursors of Bach and brought to perfection by him, the organ music in which the instrument is treated as a choir composed of different parts, each of which has an interest of its own. This is the true style of organ music. A great deal of the music that one hears performed on the organ nowadays is not organ music at all, but mere arrangement for the organ of music for some other instrument. For ourselves we confess that there is no music that seems to us so appropriate for organ voluntaries as that of Bach. What could be better calculated to inspire devout thought than the Chorale Preludes or such a composition as the C Minor Fantasia, for instance? There is a solemn dignity of tone, an atmosphere of sacredness about Bach's organ music that inspires in our minds the same feelings as we experience when we enter a noble cathedral with its stately aisles and its dim religious light. As Mendelssohn said: "Bach turns every room in which he is sung into a church." Here is a whole library of organ music suited as no other organ music is, unless it be in the same style, to the character of the instrument and the solemn service of the sanctuary. One can only marvel that our organists, with such a rich treasure-house upon which to draw, should condescend to perform the trumpery productions that one so often hears.

Perhaps one should not blame the organists altogether. They are sorely tried, sometimes, by the appeals made to them to play this or that piece of music, pretty enough, perhaps, in its way—only too pretty, indeed—as one of their voluntaries, or by the murmurings that reach their

[1] *J. S. Bach*, Bk. III. ch. iv.

ears at the severe unattractive character of the music, if they are playing the kind of music they should. It requires some courage and devotion to one's art to make no departure from the lofty standard one has set before one, to render music always of the solemn uplifting order, when one knows that there are many, in all probability the majority, who would welcome something more attractive. But we believe that they may comfort themselves with the reflection that their labours are not altogether in vain, even in the case of those who clamour for something more to their taste. If there is any musical feeling latent in these at all, it cannot but respond in time to the appeal that is made to it Sunday after Sunday by music of the kind we refer to. Gradually the taste of the congregation will be improved, and they will come to love and desire those solemn strains with which the worship of the sanctuary is associated; and when music of a different character is performed, they will feel the incongruity of it, even when it is good music of its kind, and when it is, as is unfortunately often the case, shallow worthless trash, the worse than incongruity, —the impropriety, the unseemliness, the downright irreverence of it. Even when they cannot rise to an appreciation of the character and excellence of the music, it will exercise its influence upon them none the less, and inspire those feelings of reverence and devotion which become the worshipper in the house of prayer.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION: PRESENT CONDITION AND PROSPECTS OF CHURCH MUSIC IN SCOTLAND

In concluding our brief sketch of Music in the Church we would add a few words regarding its present condition and prospects in Scotland. We believe that upon the whole the Church has reason to congratulate itself upon the improvement that has taken place in the music of its services during the last half-century. There has been a widespread tendency to make the worship of the sanctuary more dignified and beautiful, and under its influence Church music has been much improved. So great, indeed, has been the change in our Scottish Churches that it is questionable whether the pace has not been too quick, and whether the most pressing duty at present is not so much to think of further advance, as rather to make sure that we have taken full possession of the territory already gained. For three centuries metrical Psalms were the sole musical pabulum of our congregations. Then suddenly they had set before them a musical feast of fat things in the shape of hymns, anthems, chants, and organ music. Naturally the tendency was to make too free use of the new material to the neglect of the old. The metrical Psalms fell into disfavour and hymns now held the field. Those who had any claim to musical skill revelled in their new-found freedom. The

choir began to assert itself more and more in the service of praise. But the danger was that in this new enthusiasm for a richer musical service the interests of the congregation would be neglected. As a set-off to the general improvement of Church music we must admit a tendency to decline in congregational praise. The two things are not, we believe, unconnected. The falling off in the singing of the congregation was due, to some extent at any rate, to the novelty of the musical conditions in which they were placed. When people have no knowledge of music—as is the case with the great bulk of worshippers in our churches—it is familiarity alone that can make good what is lacking in respect of musical ability. Those who had the conduct of the Church praise sometimes forgot this. In their delight at the new field thrown open by the introduction of hymns, they forgot the necessity of carrying the congregation gradually along with them. We believe that if we are really concerned to preserve congregational singing, great care will require to be taken for many a day to endeavour gradually to familiarise the people with the new material placed at our disposal by the change that has come over the musical side of our Church service.

In other directions we see in our Church music evidence of the fact that the changed conditions have not come about by gradual growth within, but by the sudden opening up to us of a new territory in which our people do not yet feel themselves at home. We have the musical material at our disposal, but we have not grown up in the tradition which would enable us to use it to the best advantage. Take the case of instrumental music as an example. Through the munificence of Mr. Carnegie organs are now to be found throughout the length and breadth of the land. His liberality presents to us a challenge not unlike that of the Rabshakeh: "I

will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them." We have the horses, but can we provide the riders? We have the organs, but do we know how to use them? In many cases the organ is simply a white elephant. The congregation cannot afford to pay a salary sufficient to procure an efficient organist. And even if they could, the supply of competent musicians is limited. The organ is such a novelty in Scotland that we have not had time for a generation of organists to grow up all over the country. In rural districts the organists must still be imported, and that is an expensive procedure. Doubtless this difficulty will right itself in time. Organs are so common nowadays that players will soon multiply. But have we the tradition of sound organ playing firmly established for them to grow up under? Is there not a sad lack of the true ecclesiastical atmosphere in much of the organ playing that we have at present in our churches? We labour under the disadvantage of having gained an important adjunct to Church praise without having inherited the tradition that has gathered round it.

The same thing holds, as we have already hinted, in connexion with the chanting of the prose Psalms. There is no disguising the fact that by the majority of our people in the Scottish Churches this is still regarded as something not native to the genius of our Presbyterian worship. They have not been educated to it from their earliest years and grown to love it as an integral feature of their Church services. They are prone to regard it as an exhibition of musical skill on the part of the choir rather than an opportunity for participation, whether by voice or in spirit, extended to the congregation.

The fact is we need time gradually to assimilate the new musical material put within our reach after centuries of comparative musical privation. It behoves all who

have to do with the praise of the Church to bear this in mind. "*Festina lente*" should be their motto. Unless our aim be to convert the musical part of the service into a mere performance by the choir and organ to which the congregation listen as to a concert, we must advance cautiously and endeavour to carry the body of the people along with us. Improvement in the artistic quality of our Church music is dearly purchased at the cost of silencing the voice of the congregation in the rendering of the praise.

Among the gratifying features in present musical conditions in the Church is the faithful and devoted service rendered by the great body of singers who compose the choirs. One hears complaints sometimes of the difficulties that attend the working of a voluntary choir. The difficulties are often due more to mismanagement on the part of those who have the superintendence of the music than to lack of amenability on the part of the choir. If the discipline be firm, the training systematic and sound; if the members be made to realise that the practice is no mere pastime but the occasion for faithful, honest work; above all, if the religious side of their work be ever kept in view, and they be made to feel that they are there as those who are offering their service to the Lord, we believe that the response will be ready and hearty, and the interest well maintained. The Church owes a debt of gratitude to the members who so freely give of their time and their talents to the worthy rendering of the praise. Were all who have the requisite musical ability to volunteer their services, the Church would have at its disposal an array of talent that would make the portion of the praise committed to the choir a joy and an inspiration. All honour to those who do their part! Are there not many more who might respond to the call: "Who then is

willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?"

A promising movement for the encouragement of choirs in their work has been inaugurated in the formation of Choir Unions in various parts of the country. These are combinations of choirs throughout a certain district for the purpose of holding an annual Festival at which a performance is given of the music that has been practised. The Festival takes the form of Divine Service, and the music selected for the occasion is such as is believed to be typical of what the music of a Church service should be when the resources of the art are drawn upon to the full. The advantages of the movement are obvious. It holds a high ideal alike before the choirs which take part and before the congregation who are present at the Festival. It provides a stimulus to the study of the higher forms of Church music. It gives small country choirs an opportunity of practising works more elaborate than they could hope to perform by themselves. And it is a great object-lesson to the community on the importance of Church music, and the faithfulness and zeal with which it is being fostered by the choirs in the various churches. The movement has received the cordial support of the Psalmody and Hymns Committee of the Church of Scotland, who prepare each year an Order of Service for the use of those Unions who choose to adopt it.

We close with a few words on the spirit that should animate us in the ordering of the music of the Church.

It is only becoming that we should make it the very best we can offer. The argument in favour of good music is the same as that in favour of good architecture in the building, and good taste in the adornment, of our churches. "To what purpose is this waste?" men some-

times ask, in view of the money spent upon church decoration, organs and the like. "Might not the money have been better spent in relieving the necessity of the poor?" We remember who it was that first employed that argument. It is true that God can be worshipped as well in a barn as in a cathedral, under the blue sky on the hill-side as under the arched roof. It is true that the rude voice of the peasant, chanting his unmelodious song of praise, may be as acceptable to God as the swelling volume of the organ or the finished anthem of the choir. He who made the whole world His temple needs not the stately pile we rear to His honour. He who has choirs of angels to sing to Him does not require the feeble praise of human lips. These things can make no difference to God, we may imagine, but how much to ourselves! Can we becomingly worship Him if we give Him anything but the best? Is that the spirit in which to approach our Father in heaven, leaving His house bare and unadorned, while we make our own dwellings beautiful and splendid: making our Church praise unmelodious and discordant, while we secure the sweetest music for our own enjoyment? We deceive ourselves, as Ruskin tells us, when we profess that the choice is between God and His poor, when we impoverish the Church alleging that we mean to spend the money on the needy. The choice is not between God and the poor, but between God and ourselves; not between decorating our churches and relieving the destitute, but between adorning the place of worship and spending the money on our own enjoyment. Let us minister to the poor by all means. Them we have always with us, and we can offer no acceptable worship to God while we leave them neglected and forgotten. But so long as we have money to spend on our own homes and our own enjoyments, so long as we can make our own dwellings

beautiful and our own music sweet, then let us not grudge what is spent to make the House of God becoming and the praise of the sanctuary beautiful. To Him who is the Author of every human gift and power let us offer in devout thanksgiving the very best we have.

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